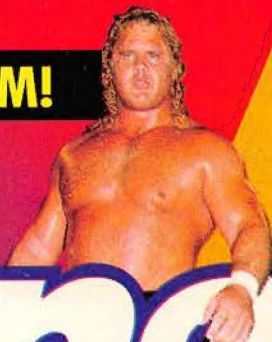


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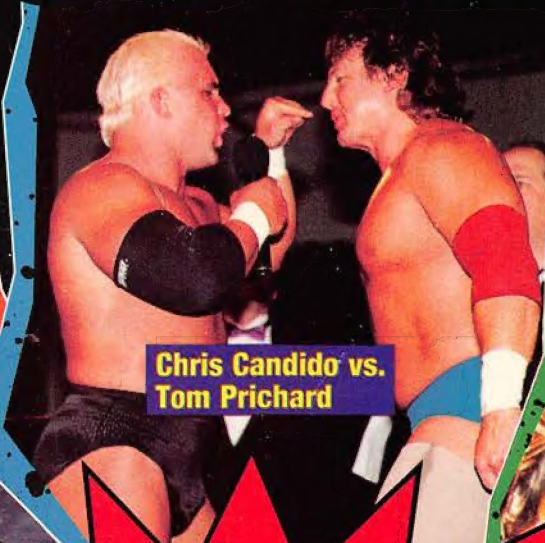
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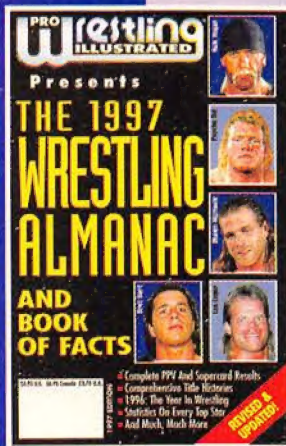
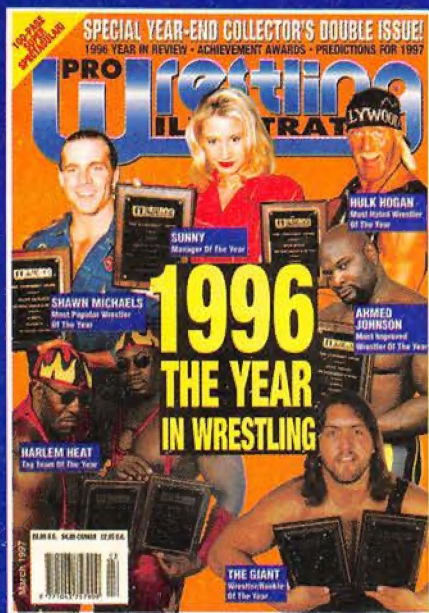
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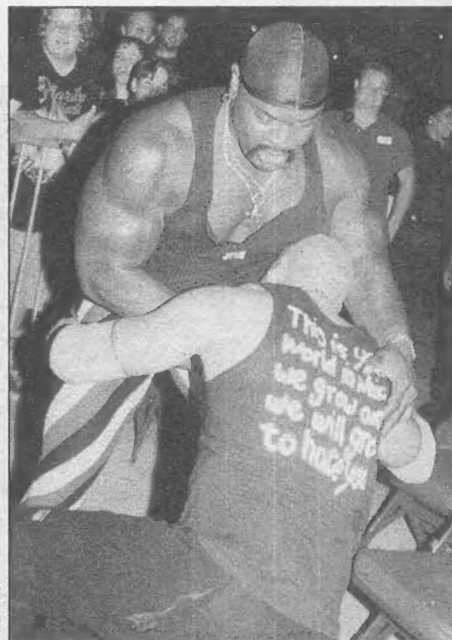
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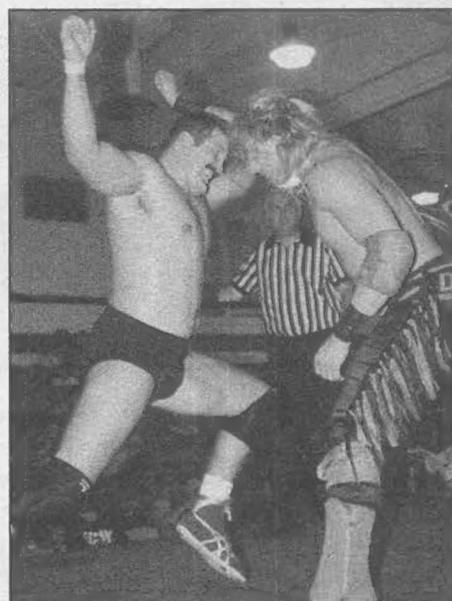
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September 30, 1997

# Sincerely Yours

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ECW wrestlers.

The actions of Tommy Dreamer are not without reason; he was provoked. Since the WWF will never tell the complete truth, I hope *INSIDE WRESTLING* will explain both sides of the war. The fans need to be told both sides of the story and make up their own minds as to what is really going on.

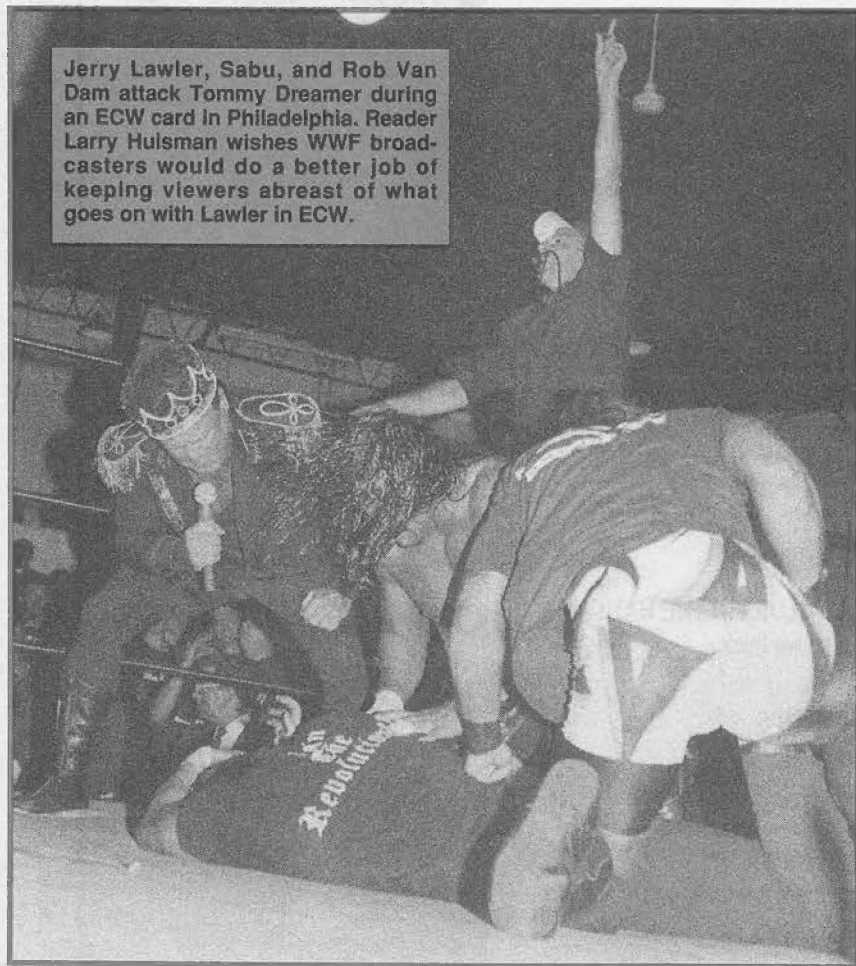
**LARRY HUISMAN**  
Utica, SD

## LISTEN TO YOUR HART

Lately, Bret Hart has been harshly criticized for his so-called "whining" and "bellyaching," even though most of what he said was true. Bret got a raw deal at *WrestleMania XII* when WWF President Gorilla Monsoon demanded that his match with Shawn Michaels continue until there was a winner. Bret had Shawn in the "sharpshooter" just before the bell rang the first time, and if the match was to continue, he should have been allowed to keep that hold on and not been forced to break it when the bell rang. Since then, Bret hasn't been getting the respect he deserves. Steve Austin has attacked him from behind every chance he's gotten, yet Austin is the one who gets cheered by the fans.

Now that Bret has The Hart Foundation to watch his back, he's the bad guy because they're giving Michaels and Austin a taste of their own medicine. Based on some of Bret's comments to this magazine, it seems that he regrets having turned down WCW's millions out of loyalty to the WWF. Vince McMahon better start trying to keep Bret happy instead of worrying about Shawn's latest tantrum. Not only is Bret one of the greatest wrestlers in the world, he is also one of the biggest reasons why the WWF hasn't crumbled after the loss of so much talent to WCW. The WWF can't afford to lose him.

**JESSICA MELENDEZ**  
Jersey City, NJ



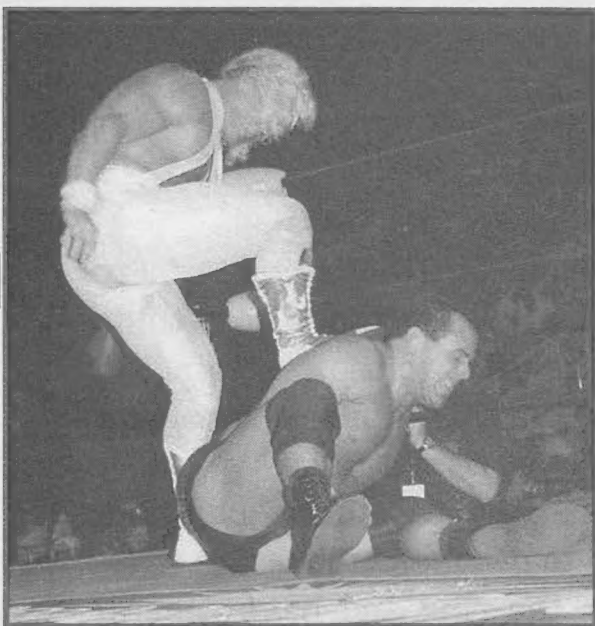
Jerry Lawler, Sabu, and Rob Van Dam attack Tommy Dreamer during an ECW card in Philadelphia. Reader Larry Huisman wishes WWF broadcasters would do a better job of keeping viewers abreast of what goes on with Lawler in ECW.

## TWO-SIDED STORY

I am appalled with some of the recent actions of the WWF in their ongoing war with ECW. Vince McMahon is only telling one side of the story. On *Raw Is War* and *War Zone*, the WWF commentators don't explain why Tommy Dreamer attacked Rob Van Dam. Instead, they just hide the facts since many people don't know

what's happening in ECW. These fans didn't see Jerry "The King" Lawler and Rob Van Dam attack Tommy Dreamer after his ECW match against Raven in June. These fans didn't hear the abusive remarks made by Van Dam and Lawler on ECW TV or hear about how they showed up at the ECW Arena in Philadelphia, challenged all of ECW, and attacked a bunch of





It took Jeff Jarrett a few tries, but he finally beat Dean Malenko for the WCW U.S. title in June. Reader David Miller believes Jarrett could win the WCW World title next.

### ONLY GETTING BETTER

I would like to congratulate Jeff Jarrett on his spectacular U.S. title victory over Dean Malenko. I have been a fan of Jarrett since his first match against Tony Falk in 1986. He used his skill and athleticism to overcome the larger and more experienced Falk, and he has

worked hard to become the superstar he is today. Jarrett has held major titles in every federation he has competed in, and he is only getting better.

Baldylocks Hogan had better watch out. Even without the Horsemen at Jarrett's side to neutralize "Hogan's Zeroes," the World title is as good as his.

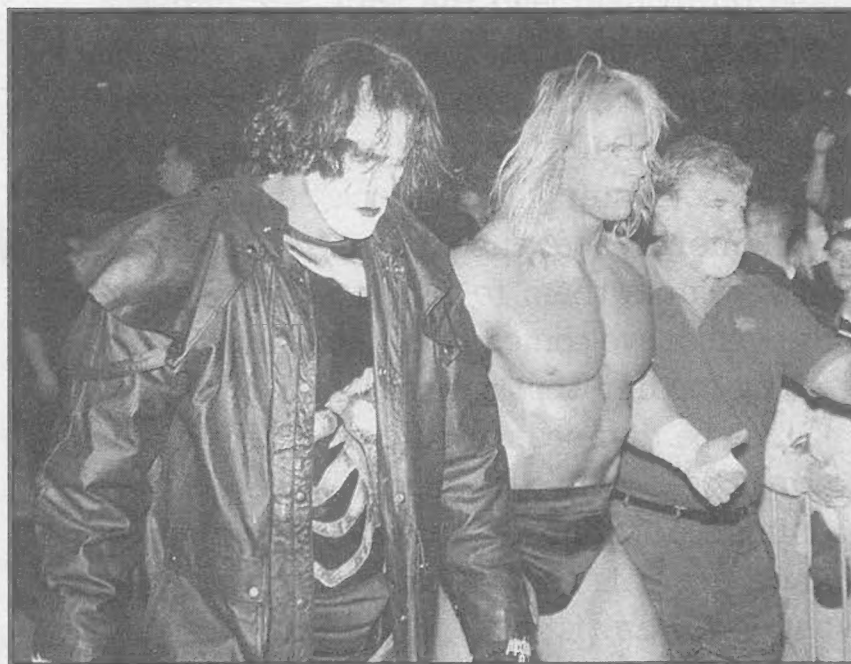
DAVID MILLER  
Oaktown, IN

### THE REAL WORLD

I am growing very tired of Sting's silent tantrum ("Sting: How Can We Get Him From Here To Here?" August 1997). I have always been a Sting fan, but I

have lost any desire to see his little mime impersonation anymore. Sure, it was interesting to see him standing there silent while chaos was going on around him for the first few weeks, but this has gone on for too long. How many more months are we going to have to

(Continued on page 52)



Sting walks down the aisle with Lex Luger after making another unscheduled appearance at a WCW show. Reader Karen Bearsley says it's time he started talking and wrestling again already.

# Inside Wrestling

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# REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

By Stu Saks

Rob Van Dam is the centerfold of the November 1997 edition of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*. Congratulations to him. I know that's something he's always wanted. "Not every wrestler makes it to the centerfold of *PWI*," Van Dam once told me. "To a lot of us, this is more important than a championship belt, because you can't get it on a fluke."

Indeed you cannot. The editors of *PWI* are very careful about whom they select to appear in the middle of that magazine. Among the criteria, a wrestler must be both successful in the ring and have general marketable appeal. He must be a star among stars.

Rob Van Dam was inching closer and closer to that status even before he became "Mr. Monday Night." What he accomplished in associating with Jerry Lawler and disassociating with ECW was to force himself into national prominence a few months earlier than he might have in the regular course of time, yet at the same time take the very real gamble that he has burned bridges that will never be rebuilt.

This is a crucial time in the ongoing nationalization of Extreme Championship Wrestling. As one of the finest pure talents in the federation, Van Dam was counted on to help lead the way. And while ECW stands to benefit on a short-term basis from the publicity being generated by the WWF vs. ECW war, Van Dam's role is not what it was envisioned to be. What happens to Van Dam if and when Vince McMahon no longer sees the benefit of continuing his association with ECW? McMahon could dump him merely because he would serve as a reminder to fans of a feud he wants them to forget. ECW is so angry at Van Dam that he might never be welcomed back into the fold.

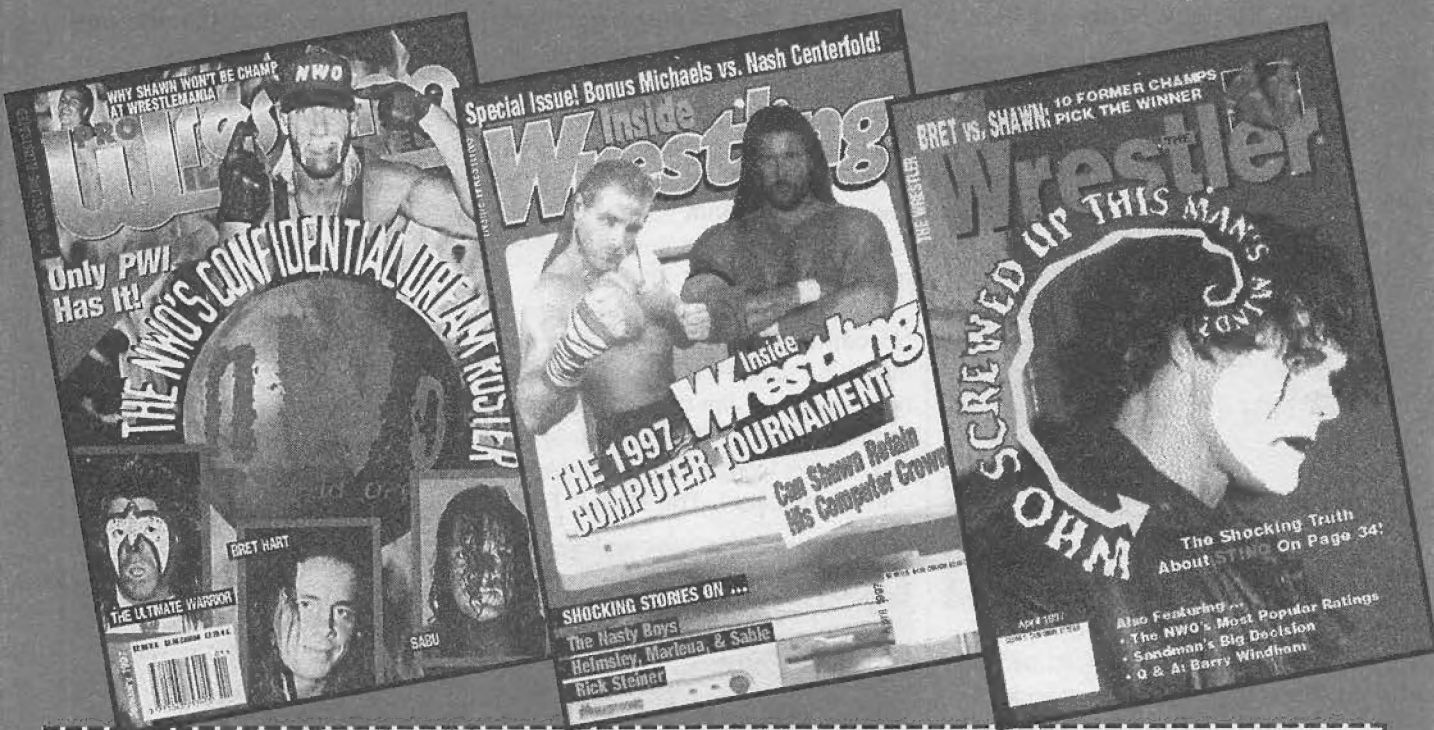
Van Dam has one thing going for him that cannot be overlooked. He's a terrific wrestler. And, politics be damned, terrific wrestlers are valuable commodities. Van Dam is well-aware of the risks he has taken, but he also has enough confidence in himself to believe he'll come out on top once the initial hysteria over his actions has died down.

Though I do not like what Van Dam is doing, I still like Van Dam. I hope he knows what he's doing. I'd hate to think this *PWI* centerfold is his last.



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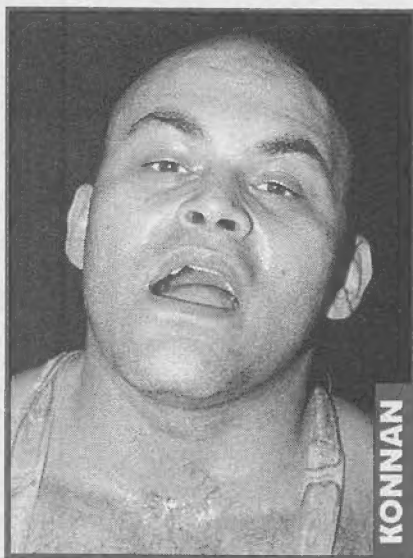
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# NAMES MA

**K**ONNAN USED TO be a very warm, caring man. That's the way **Rey Mysterio Jr.** wishes he could still think of his old friend.



KONNAN

Instead, he lay in a hospital bed with nothing but yearnings for revenge.

Mysterio need surgery after his leg was brutally attacked by Konnan following his loss to Kevin Nash at during an edition of *WCW Monday Nitro* in June.

"He used to be my friend. We used to train together," said Mysterio, a sensitive kind of guy. "Even though our philosophies are very different now, I still had respect for him. I guess I was wrong."

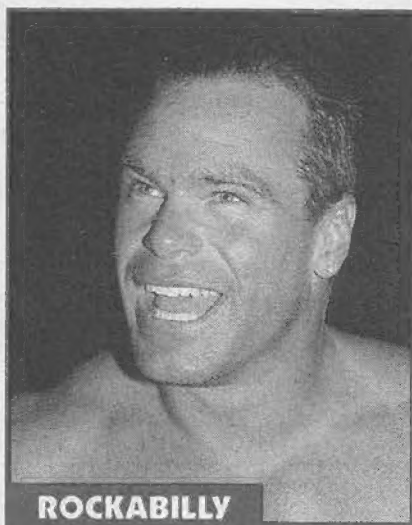
Hopefully, Konnan will be brought before the WCW Executive Committee to explain his actions. All he offered me was this:

"It brought a big smile to my face to hear him screech in pain. I'm sick of him. He gets more publicity than me and better matches than me. Now he's crippled and I am in the spotlight. That's where I deserve to be."

Citing an accumulation of injuries, Japanese superstar **Riki Choshu** has

announced his retirement. The 23-year veteran's final match will be on January 4, 1998, at the Tokyo Dome ... Look for "**Mr. Monday Night**" **Rob Van Dam** in two movies being run on HBO: *Superfights* and *Blood Moon*. "I've instructed HBO to run them mainly on Monday nights because that's the night people turn on their TV sets to find me," Van Dam said. "If I'm on *Raw*, they can get a double dose of me on the same night. That's great!"

**The Headhunters**, the famed bloodthirsty twins who have competed mainly in Puerto Rico and Japan, have been signed by **Jim Cornette** to wrestle in the WWF ... **Rockabilly** tells me that he has worked out his problems with his manager, **The Honky Tonk**



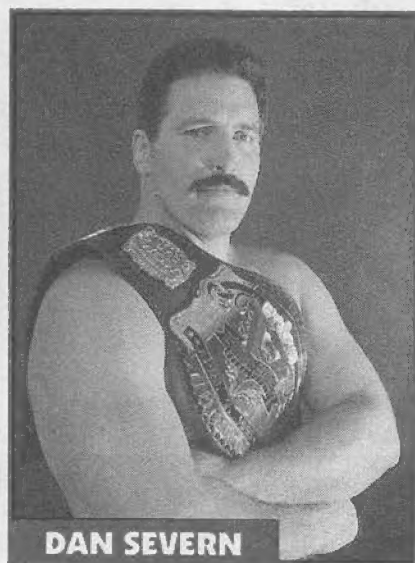
ROCKABILLY

**Man**, and that the two will remain together. "We're gonna spend more time together working on strategy," he said. "Before, he always told me what should we do, but now I'm getting more input. We're gonna be great together now."

USWA Southern champion **Billy Travis** plans to follow **Brian Christopher** to the WWF and continue his feud with him there. "I already beat

Christopher for this one belt," he explained, "and I understand that the WWF is going to have a light heavyweight tournament. Christopher thinks he can win that. Well, once I show up, he can kiss all his title dreams goodbye!"

**Vladimir Kolofov** has won the Ultimate Championship Wrestling heavyweight title from **Rick Morton** ... Although he was a guest broadcaster at a recent WWF *Raw Is War* in Detroit, NWA champ **Dan Severn** has not signed with the WWF. "We've



DAN SEVERN

talked about the possibility of a few matches, maybe against **Ken Shamrock**," Severn says, "but no contract talks just yet" ... **Butch Reed** is scheduled to compete on several East Coast NWA cards ... **The Centerfolds** have lost their North American All-Star Wrestling tag team belts to **Scufflin' Hillbilly** and **Colorado Kid**.

**Todd Myers** is taking credit for **Bobby Jay's** pinfall victory over **Robbie Royce** for the Canadian Wrestling Federation North American title. "I gave Robbie Royce the beating of his life on two different occasions

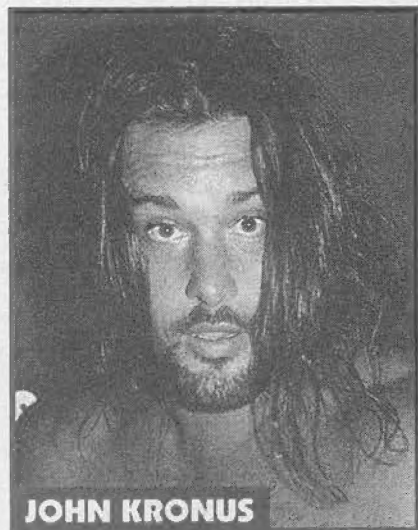


# KIN' NEWS

By Bill Apter

just a few days before Bobby Jay laid his hands on him," Myers said. "On his best night, Bobby Jay couldn't even beat my grandma! He oughta just hand me that belt right now!"

**John Kronus** is accepting a lot of singles matches while his **Eliminator** partner, **Perry Saturn**, recovers from a serious knee injury. In one of those, he



JOHN KRONUS

was forced to submit to **Taz'** "Taz-mission" chokeout. "It was weird not having a hand to tag off to when I was in trouble," Kronus admitted, "but I'll make the adjustment" ... **Fury**, a member of the tag team **The Army of Aggression**, suffered a broken nose when **Terminator I** hit him with the lid of a garbage can ... **Lance Diamond** expects to be back in action by late-November. His right shoulder had been giving him trouble for several years before he took time off to have it surgically repaired ... Congratulations to NWA light heavyweight champion **Steve Corino** on his recent marriage to long-time girlfriend **Nichole**.

**Bobo Brazil Jr.** has beaten **Johnny Paradise** for the ASWF heavyweight title ... Regarding his recent tour of Mexico, **Gorgeous**

**George III** said, "I had to hire a bodyguard to keep the women from tearing at me. Those *senoritas* want my body so bad!" Believe him? ... **Jim Neidhart**



GORGEOUS GEORGE III

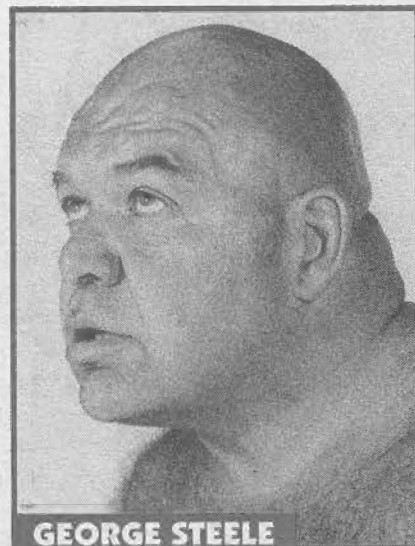
had a falling-out with his friend **Chris "Tatanka" Chavis**, the UCW champion, and has left that promotion. "Staying there and wrestling him would prove nothing," Neidhart explained. "He stayed champion only because me and **Bruce Hart** ran in and saved his butt every time an opponent was beating him."

**Ivan Koloff** is training young **J.B. Jammer** for a series of Russian chain matches against **The Nightbreed** ... **Bobby Duncum Jr.** has signed with ECW ... **Impostor Sting** continues to wrestle in Japan. "I've become a legend here already," he says. "In Japan, I am Sting. If the other guy comes over, he'll be considered an impostor and get booed out of here by all the fans."

I was sad to hear of the deaths of both **Stan "The Man" Stasiak** and broadcaster **Dennis James**. Stasiak, a former WWF champ who was best known for his heart punch, was 60 when he died, while James, 79, was said to be the very first host of

wrestling on TV (telecast on the Dumont networks). One of his favorite things to do was to use sound effects when a wrestler was getting his arm wrenched or his leg locked. He also hosted several quiz shows.

Remember **Van Hammer**? He competed in WCW in the early-'90s and has been talking to WWF promoters about a possible stint there ... Don't you miss **Jesse Ventura** as a broadcaster? Well, don't look for him to get back into wrestling anytime soon. Now that he's concluded his term as mayor of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, he is thinking about running for governor of Minnesota ... The career of **George "The Animal" Steele** is on the upswing. He is currently appearing in a new movie called *Blowfish* and has signed for a match in Delaware's ECWA against **Mr. Ooh La La** ... **The New Razor** and **New Diesel** are still feuding in



GEORGE STEELE

the USWA and at press time were preparing for a loser-leaves-town match.

That's all for now. I'll see you at the matches! □



**T**HE FIRST BAD thing that happened after I got home from Atlanta last month was that Publisher Stu Saks questioned the vanilla shake on my expense report.

"Dave," Saks asked me, "was this really necessary?"

"Yes," I told him.

"Which of the five food groups does a vanilla shake belong to?" Saks demanded.

I had him.

"Dairy. It's made of milk, Stu."

Other than a few headline meetings, that was the extent of my con-

# ON THE ROAD

With Dave Lenker

versation with Saks for nearly three weeks, other than when he ran out to Burger King for lunch.

"Anybody want anything?" Saks asked.

"Yeah," I said with a smile. "I'll have a vanilla shake."

The second bad thing that happened was seeing Madusa lose to Akira Hokuto at The Great American Bash and being forced to retire. Madusa, who injured her left knee in the match, went on *Nitro* the following night and tearfully announced her intentions of complying fully with the

stipulation. Mascara dripped down her cheeks. Her substantial chest threatened to burst through her insubstantial blouse. I thought I was going to break down in tears, too, so I went to my freezer and made a vanilla shake.

Why was this a bad thing? Because the next day, Saks told me that I might want to take a trip to Germany.

"Why would I want to go to Germany after I just came back from Tokyo?" I said.

"That was a month ago," Saks said. "Besides, it looks like Madusa's going to wrestle on a few cards there."

"Impossible—she retired," I informed him.

"Not impossible," Saks said. "Remember. This is wrestling. People don't always do what they say they're going to do, especially when they say they're going to retire."

Faced with this indisputable reasoning, I immediately booked my flight. Two days later, I was jetting eight hours to Berlin, Germany, where I landed, overcame numerous language barriers, rented a Mercedes, and headed northwest to Hamburg, where WCW had a card that night. Sure enough, one of my first sightings in Hamburg was a poster advertising the WCW card at the Sporthalle: The Giant and Lex Luger vs. Scott Hall and Kevin Nash, Madusa vs. Luna Vachon.

"Unbelievable," I told Saks when I called and woke him from a deep sleep. My mistake. I forgot about the six-hour time difference. It was 3 a.m. in Pennsylvania. "She's on the card."

"Better check it out for sure," Saks said sleepily.

"Are you kidding? Of course I'm going to the card. But first I'm having a beer."

"Don't forget to check the freshness date," Saks cracked.

Sure enough, that night at the Sporthalle in Hamburg, Madusa defied the stipulations of her retirement match and wrestled Luna Vachon. I cornered Madusa outside the locker room area after her

(Continued on page 54)



Madusa loves carrying around the American flag and loves wearing the stars and stripes on her attire. But her wrestling career in the U.S. ended on June 15. She extended it a few days in Germany, though.





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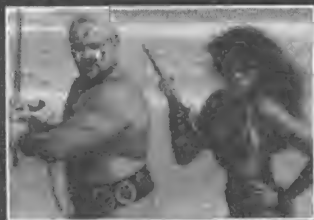
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## Behind the Dressing Room Door

by David Rosenbaum

**S**HORT ATTENTION SPAN Theater, the old *Saturday Night Live* skit, has been coming to mind a lot these days.

Nothing much in wrestling has been able to keep my interest for long periods of time. Stan Stasiak died. Sad. Ahmed Johnson joined the Nation of Domination. Surprised. Madusa retired. Oh, well. "Psycho" Sid Vicious, Flash Funk, Doug Furnas, and Phil Lafon got into a car wreck in Canada. Inevitable. Boxer Tommy Hearn's doesn't want Bret Hart to be the "Hitman." Too bad.

If only that dream match between Ted Turner and Rupert Murdoch would actually happen. Better yet, throw Vince McMahon into the mix and make it a triangle match. Hold the match outside CNN Center at Centennial Olympic Park. Winner rules cable, losers get relegated to cable access channels. Vince vs. Ted vs. Rupert would surely hold my interest, at least for a few hours.

Tommy Hearn's. Bret Hart. Bret Hart objects to Hearn's using the nickname "Hitman." Hearn's objects to Hart using the same name. Sounds like a publicity stunt to me. Is that what Hearn's has been reduced to, a publicity hound? Hart is still an active wrestler, one of the best in the business, despite his spate of injuries, and can call himself whatever he wants. Besides, considering what happened to those Detroit Red Wings players in the car accident, who'd want to be called the "Hitman" in Detroit?

Madusa. Wrestling in Germany, even though she's supposedly retired. Dave Lenker called me from Germany—Hamburg, I think—and gave me the news. You know, Madusa's had a great career, one of the best of any

(Continued on page 55)

Boxer Thomas "Hitman" Hart almost got into a fight with Bret "Hitman" Hart during an edition of *Raw Is War* this summer. Dave Rosenbaum wonders why either man objects to the other having the same nickname.



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# the Insider

by Brandi Mankiewicz

*(The opinions expressed in this column are those of Brandi Mankiewicz alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of anyone else on the staff of this magazine.)*

NEVER THOUGHT I would use the word brave in the same sentence in which I mentioned the name Jerry Lawler, but here goes: Jerry Lawler is the bravest man in professional wrestling. I say that with great conviction and without sarcasm. "The King" is again a fighter, not a joker.

About five years ago, the "King Of Memphis" started to become the kind of man he had fought against his entire life: a cartoon character similar to the ones he draws. A cagey grappler had become a shrieking clown prince spewing out one-liners that would make even the worst of all standup comedians wince.

But in one night that changed for the better, at least from my vantage point. Never again will I call Lawler a bug-eyed coward.

How you ask—how can one man undergo such a startling metamorphosis so quickly? How did the cowardly lion of professional wrestling suddenly receive his badge of courage?

Simple. He had the guts to enter the ECW Arena and attack just about every wrestler he saw, the fans (verbally), and the very spirit of the entire Philadelphia-based promotion. I thought it was an illusion. Perhaps he was a new member of the Blue World Order: The Imperial Margarine Blue King. But no, it was him, in the flesh ... the same flesh that most of the ECW

wanted to tear off his very bones. Jerry "The King" Lawler had broken down the doors of the ECW Arena. Broadcaster Joey Styles didn't have enough "Oh my Gods" in him to describe the shock.

Can you say crown jewels? You should, because Lawler needed them to enter the enemy territory, not to mention its home base of operations.

For weeks, I listened to Lawler blather on about "Extremely Crappy Wrestling." *Clever and amusing*, I thought, *but what are you going to do about it? Keep talking and talking like you usually do? Run away when it comes time to fight?*

The old Jerry Lawler did all his talking with his fists and his piledriver, a move banned by the USWA. Perhaps he needed to put the joke book away and pick up a copy of *Roots*.

But when the lights came up on a darkened ECW Arena, there was Lawler helping out "Mr. Monday Night" Rob Van Dam, Sabu, and Bill Alfonso. The crowd was stunned. Lawler literally lost his voice as he screamed at the people he so hates,

the people so loyal to ECW.

But although the Trekkie rejects seemed at first indignant over the invasion, the look on their faces was one of excitement. Their feelings toward Lawler seemed to combine hatred and admiration. Just when wrestling was becoming mundane, Lawler was shaking things up, just as he used to do. They knew that with Lawler making at an appearance at the ECW Arena, they were in for a promotional war of the worlds. Imagine the combination. WWF vs. ECW. ECW vs. USWA. WWF vs. USWA.

*(Continued on page 56)*



All you needed to do was look closely at Jerry Lawler's face on the night he invaded ECW to see he wasn't clowning around. This was an angry and determined Lawler. And that's the Lawler I respect.

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# ON Assignment

By Liz Hunter

IF THIS COLUMN could be summed up in four words, it would be this: Madusa, you blew it! Something happened on June 15, 1997, that made me very crabby—as crabby, some on the staff of this magazine might say, as Brandi Mankiewicz. That was the night Madusa was pinned by WCW World Women's champ Akira Hokuto, and due to a prematch stipulation, forced to retire from active competition (she did honor previous commitments in Germany the following week). In losing that match, Madusa in effect killed women's wrestling in the U.S.

Women's wrestling has always been a difficult sell in the U.S., be it as a stand-alone product or an appendage to one of the major promotions. G.I.O.W. gave us scantily clad women who couldn't do much in the ring, the Ladies Professional Wrestling Association tried to give us conventional female competi-

tion, and both the WWF and WCW made half-hearted attempts at establishing female divisions.

Not one of the above attempts was a success.

Before I continue, I should tell you that I am a fan of women's wrestling. Fabulous Moolah, Judy Grable, and Vivian Vachon proved that women can be just as exciting to watch in the ring as men. They were the ones who got me interested in this so-called sport of kings. I also recognize that American fans have greeted women's wrestling with a tepid response. But for me, it all comes down to the product and how it is presented by the promoters and the athletes.

In December 1995, WCW secured the services of WWF Women's champion Madusa (a.k.a. Alundra Blayze), who promptly tossed her WWF belt in the trash upon arriving. She was going to be the perfect foundation on which

WCW was to build a women's division. Seeing a former employee trash its belt was too much for the WWF to handle. The federation abruptly got rid of its entire women's division.

But since the end of 1996, we have been watching a women's division founder under the title reign of Akira Hokuto, a very talented athlete, but not a woman whom American fans were clamoring to see every week. Madusa made numerous attempts to wrest the title away from her, but to no avail. Then she became so desperate for yet another title shot that she foolishly allowed Hokuto's manager, Sonny Ono, to cajole her into putting her career on the line.

Very stupid move. Madusa lost. Women's wrestling in WCW lost. And any forward movement that the female contingent had made in professional wrestling had been

*(Continued on page 57)*

Madusa had a terrific career and deserves to be praised for accomplishing a lot in the ring, but Liz Hunter believes she must also accept some of the blame for the decline of women's wrestling in the U.S.



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# INSIDE WRESTLING CAPSULE PROFILE <sup>259</sup>

## KEVIN NASH

**W**HO COULD HAVE predicted five years ago that Kevin Nash would become one of the most recognizable wrestlers in North America in 1997? Nash tried several names but never made it past the mid-card level during his first three years in the sport, then got his big break when Shawn Michaels hired him as his bodyguard in the WWF in 1993 (*"A break, yeah, but you gotta be great to take advantage of them"*) ... Won the Intercontinental, World tag team, and World heavyweight titles during his three years with the WWF ... Nash joined WCW as Oz in 1991 ... Changed his name to Vinnie Vegas and was once part of Harley Race's stable ... Was humbled in matches with Van Hammer

(*"Yeah, but where is he now?"*) ... Became Diesel in the WWF in April 1993, the night he helped Michaels beat Marty Jannetty for the I-C title ... Singlehandedly (and consecutively) eliminated seven men at the 1994 Royal Rumble (*"I saw fear in all their eyes"*) ... Beat Razor Ramon (Scott Hall) for the I-C title in April 1994 after Michaels interfered ... Looked like he had WWF champ Bret Hart beaten at King of the Ring '94, but Jim Neidhart interfered after Diesel power-bombed Hart and got the "Hitman" DQ'd ... Teamed with Michaels to win the WWF tag title from The Headshrinkers in August '94, but one night later at SummerSlam, Michaels' interference backfired, and Diesel lost the I-C belt to Ramon (*"Not my fault"*) ... Diesel and Michaels split and vacated the tag team title at Survivor Series ...

Three nights later, Diesel pinned Bob Backlund for the WWF title in six seconds (*"A real grueling contest"*) ... Wrestled Bret Hart to a draw at the 1995 Royal Rumble in a match marred by interference from Owen Hart and Michaels ... Pinned Michaels at WrestleMania XI, and one night later, Diesel and Michaels reunited when Sid attacked Michaels (*"I never knew whether to like him or hate him"*) ... Had a great summer of '95, successfully defending his title against Sid, Mabel, Bam Bam Bigelow, Owen Hart, and Jeff Jarrett ... Luck ran out at Survivor Series '95 when he was pinned by Bret Hart ... Was furious afterward and accused WWF head Vince McMahon of turning him into a corporate puppet ... WWF announced a few months later that Diesel would be leaving in the spring ... Turned against Michaels during a tag team match and lost several brutal matches to him in the ensuing months, including one in which Diesel used the prosthetic leg of Mad Dog Vachon as a weapon (*"What's wrong with that?"*) ... As Nash, he invaded WCW with Scott Hall in June 1996, and they shocked everyone by revealing Hulk Hogan as the third member of their group ... He and Hall won the WCW World tag team title from Harlem Heat at Halloween Havoc '96 ... Appeared to lose those belts twice—to the Steiners and Lex Luger and The Giant—but Eric Bischoff used his power in WCW to make sure the title didn't change hands (*"He just did what was right"*) ... Along with the rest of the New World Order, Nash continues to feud with most of the prominent players in WCW (*"Bring 'em all on; we thrive on competition"*). □



Kevin Nash gets some help from the middle rope as he chokes Chris Benoit. Nash and Scott Hall have been the WCW World tag team champions since last October, but some would say they're lucky to still have the belts.



**KEVIN NASH**



# Where Are They NOW

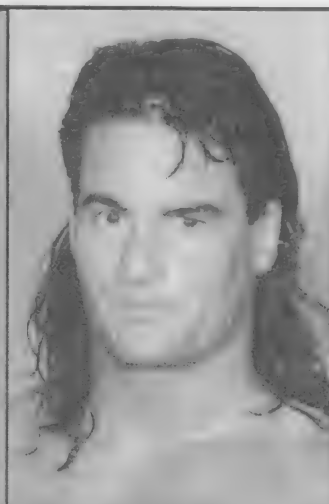
Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



## JACKIE FARGO

Throughout his long career, Fargo, who competed mostly in Tennessee, would always say, "One day, I'm going back home," home being China Grove, North Carolina. Well, Jackie finally moved back there a year ago and opened a nightclub/restaurant. "Tennessee

became my second home," Jackie said, "and I still go back often to see my buddy Jerry Lawler. It's a kick to be recognized on the street by so many nice folks, but China Grove is home, and I love that, too!"



## JEFF GAYLORD

Gaylord had most of his success in the USWA, where he teamed with Jeff Jarrett to win the tag team championship from "Bruise Brother" Don Harris and Brian Lee in 1990. He also had exciting feuds with Jerry Lawler in Memphis and the late Kerry Von

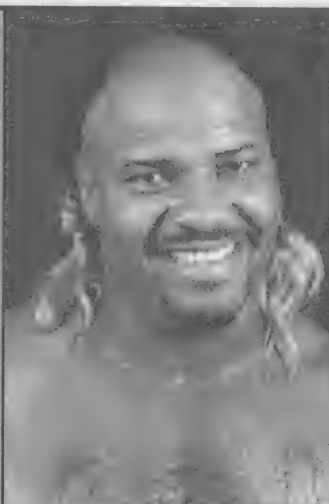
Erich in Texas. Today, Jeff is involved in a family-run automobile business in Kansas City, but he still keeps himself in top shape. "You never know when I may want to come back and beat Jerry Lawler again," he says.



## KILLER KARL KOX

One of the most sadistic wrestlers who ever stepped into the ring, Kox retired in the mid-'80s and became a guard at a prison. Karl left that position a few years ago, however, and he and his wife have since bought a mobile home community in suburban

Dallas. "I still watch a lot of matches on TV," he said, "and I can tell you that there is not one guy out there who is as tough as me. In my best days, I could have beaten every one of those NWO bums all by myself."



## ICEMAN PARSONS

Only an occasional competitor on independent cards in Texas these days, Parsons is working as both a security agent and a bodyguard at several nightspots in the Lone Star State. "I made a good living in wrestling, and the bodyguard busi-

ness is just an extension of that career," Parsons says. "When big stars come down to Texas, they know they can rely on me to protect them. There aren't too many people around who are stupid enough to mess with me."

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# NEWS FROM THE

**LOS ANGELES, CA**  
BY JERRY JORDAN



**CHRIS JERICO**  
VS.  
**SYXX**



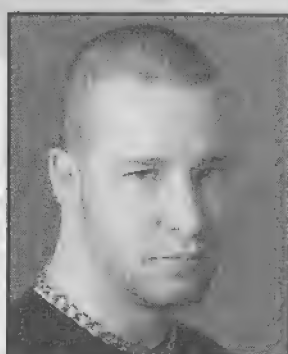
Jericho got a big break when WCW cruiser-weight champion Syxx and challenger Rey Mysterio agreed to give him a shot at the title immediately after their match at The Forum. Syxx expended a great deal of energy in the match, which lasted 11:33 and had very little left for Jericho. Jericho pinned Syxx after hitting him with a leg lariat. Syxx later protested the match to the WCW Executive Committee, which ruled the title change valid.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Juventud Guerrera, Super Calo, & Lizmark Jr. defeated Konnan, La Parka, & Villano IV ... Ultimo Dragon beat Psicosis ... Eddy Guerrero beat Dean Malenko ... Rick & Scott Steiner beat Marcus Bagwell & Masa Chono ... Roddy Piper beat Ric Flair ... Dallas Page defeated Randy Savage ... Lex Luger & The Giant beat WCW World tag team champions Scott Hall & Kevin Nash by disqualification.

**JIM THORPE, PA**  
BY TIMOTHY A. WALKER



**ROCCO ROCK**  
VS.  
**RECKLESS YOUTH**



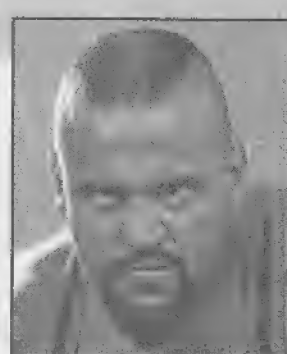
Rock made the mistake of talking to some of the fans before his match on this IPW card, and he got jumped from behind by Youth. That attack allowed Youth to get the upper hand in the beginning, but Rock gained control when he threw Youth over the bar counter at the Flagstaff. Rock then grabbed a pitcher of water and hit Youth over the head with it. After beating on him for several minutes, Rock motioned to special guest referee Johnny Graham to pin Youth as he made the count.

**OTHER BOUTS:** IPW heavyweight champ Brick Bronsky pinned Frank Stalletto ... 911 defeated The Mutilators in a handicap match ... John Rambo pinned Big E. Sleaze ... Doug Flex beat The Mutilator by disqualification ... Glen Osbourne defeated Cueball Carmichael ... Reckless Youth beat Julio Sanchez ... The Mutilator defeated Jack Hammer by submission ... The Grungers beat Blackhawk & Slick Boy.

**PHILADELPHIA, PA**  
BY DAVE REYNOLDS



**JOHN KRONUS**  
VS.  
**TAZ**



ECW TV champ Taz and John Kronus shook hands before the bout, signalling to the fans that this would be a friendly encounter. Surprisingly, it stayed that way. Taz took the advantage by executing a double-underarm suplex, but Kronus countered with a power bomb. The next few minutes saw a display of great technical mat wrestling, but that stopped when they went outside the ring and threw each other into a railing. Back in the ring, Kronus whipped Taz into a turnbuckle, but as he went for his springboard elbow, Taz hooked him in the "Taz-mission" for the submission win.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Lance Storm beat Tracey Smothers ... PG-13 beat Mikey Whipwreck & Spike Dudley ... Chris Candido pinned Tom Prichard ... Bam Bam Bigelow pinned Pit Bull II ... ECW tag team champions Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley beat The Gangstas ... B. Mahoney pinned Louie Spicolli ... Sabu & Rob Van Dam beat Tommy Dreamer & The Sandman.

# WRESTLING CAPITALS

**ANAHEIM, CA  
BY JIMMY VASQUEZ**



**BIG VAN VADER  
VS.  
GOLDUST**



Vader berated Goldust as he began sparring with him, but neither got a clear advantage in the first few minutes. Later, Paul Bearer interfered on Vader's behalf, hitting Goldust with a shoe. That infuriated Marlena, who chased him around the ring at the Arrowhead Pond. As the match went on, 'Dust tried to slam Vader, but he collapsed with the big man on top of him and was pinned.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Rockabilly pinned Flash Funk ... Faarooq & Kama Mustafa defeated The New Blackjacks ... Ken Shamrock beat Jim Neidhart ... Sable won a "California Tanning" contest over Sunny, Marlena, and Chyna ... Owen Hart & Davey Boy Smith won a triangle match over Henry & Phineas Godwinn and The Road Warriors ... Mankind defeated Hunter Hearst Helmsley by disqualification ... WWF World champ The Undertaker beat Steve Austin and Bret Hart in a triangle match.

**OBERHAUSEN, GERMANY  
BY JOHN FOOSE**



**CHRIS BENOIT  
VS.  
MENG**



Meng has beaten a lot of tough opponents of late, but he couldn't overcome Benoit. Early on, Benoit's legs got tangled around the top turnbuckle, and Jimmy Hart distracted the referee so Meng could get some cheap shots in on him. Woman stopped that by grabbing Hart's jacket and pulling him off the ring apron. Later, Meng tried a top-rope splash and missed, but Benoit's diving headbutt hit its mark. When Hart climbed the apron again, Benoit turned his attention to him, which gave Meng a chance to try to hit Benoit. But Benoit ducked and Meng nailed Hart. In the midst of the confusion, Benoit rolled up Meng.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Alex Wright pinned Hugh Morris ... Madusa pinned Luna Vachon ... Rick & Scott Steiner defeated Harlem Heat ... Rey Mysterio Jr. pinned Dean Malenko ... Dallas Page defeated M. Wall Street ... The Giant & Lex Luger beat WCW World tag team champs Scott Hall & Kevin Nash by disqualification.

**UNIONDALE, NY  
BY RAY HAMILL**



**MANKIND  
VS.  
HUNTER HEARST  
HELMSLEY**



Mankind wasted no time attacking Helmsley, battling with him through the crowd and up the ramp leading to the dressing rooms. As Mankind went for the mandible claw outside the ring, though, Chyna whacked him and broke the hold. A few minutes later, Mankind applied the claw again and tried for a pin, but the referee was distracted by Chyna. After clotheslining HHH over the top rope, Mankind was again stopped by Chyna, this time as he went to hit him with a chair. Later, Mankind went for a third mandible claw, but Chyna entered the ring, prompting the referee to disqualify Helmsley.

**OTHER BOUTS:** Scott Taylor pinned Aldo Montoya ... Kama Mustafa & Faarooq beat The Headbangers ... Brian Pillman defeated Jesse James ... The Road Warriors wrestled Henry & Phineas Godwinn to a double-disqualification ... Big Van Vader beat Goldust ... The Undertaker & Ken Shamrock beat Owen Hart & Davey Boy Smith.





## Matt Brock's **Plain** *Speaking*

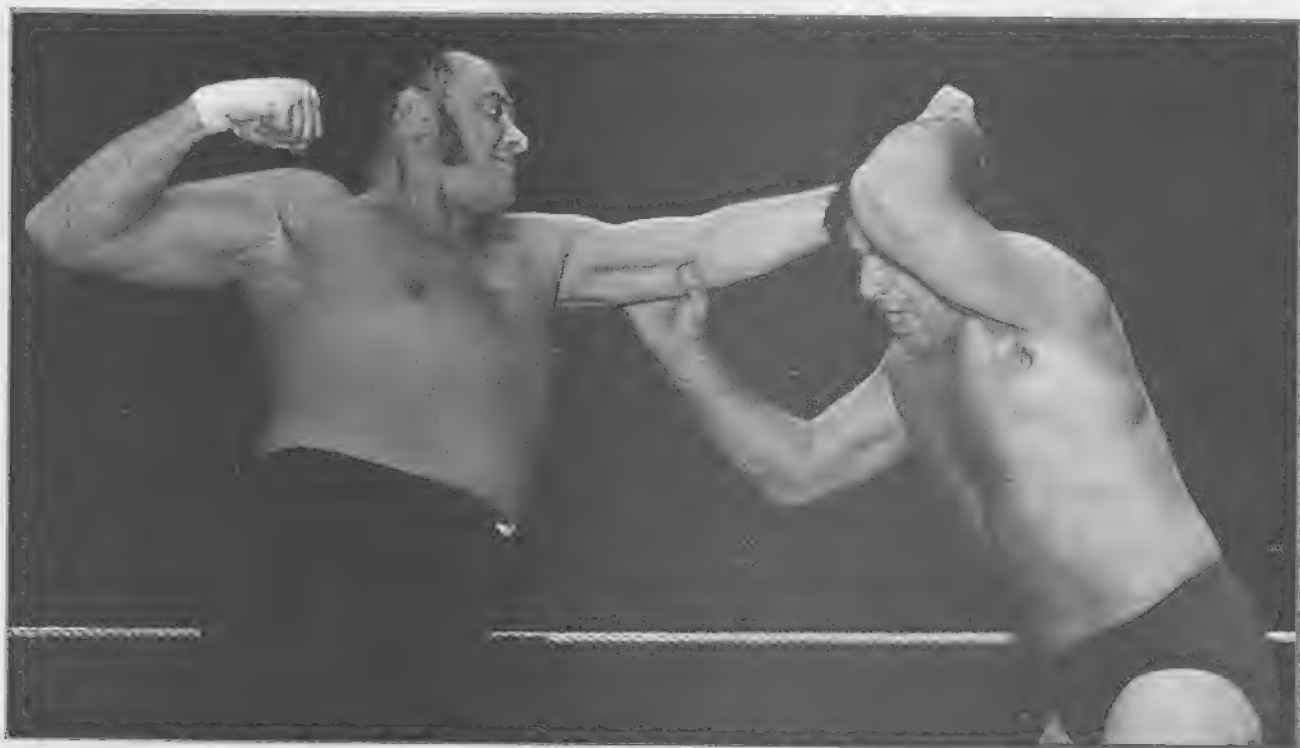
**Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor**

A great man died of heart failure here on June 19, and the wrestling world will never be the same, even though it had been a long time since his lumpy figure had graced the ring. Stan Stasiak, who in 1973 won the WWF World heavyweight title from Pedro Morales and held the strap for nine whole days before losing it to Bruno Sammartino, is no longer with us, and that's a damn shame. Stasiak was called tough when tough meant guys like Fred Blassie, who'd poke your eye out with a pencil if he had the chance, and Killer Kowalski, who'd suck your eyeball out of its socket without even blinking his own eyes. Stasiak tried to cripple his opponents, came real close to it a few times, but what he was best known for was one of the most devastating finishing maneuvers anyone's ever felt: the heart

**PORTLAND, OR**

punch. Stasiak would deliver that old sucker with a sudden blow and I'd swear, when it hit, you could hear the poor victim's heart stop beating from all the way up in the rafters. Time passes pretty quickly in this world, and I would've sworn Stasiak was about 70 years old, but then I found out he was only 60 and that made the whole deal even sadder. Every once in a while, a new young gun comes along and describes himself as the toughest man who ever lived, and I'm thinking of only one question. You know what it is: Are you as tough as Stan Stasiak? As far as I'm concerned, that's still the standard by which everyone has to be judged. Still never seen anyone who could meet it.

The Road Warriors are still one of the top teams around, but they have one big problem. They're always going to be compared to The Road Warriors. Saw them wrestle Henry and Phineas Godwinn to a double-disqualification and



STASIAK'S HEART PUNCH

something was missing. About seven or eight years ago, Hawk and Animal would have stormed the ring and had those two hillbillies for dinner, not even given them the chance to stick around and get a lucky break. Nowadays, the Warriors just don't have that same aura. Tell you one thing, and you can agree or disagree, but it's the truth: When you have a good thing going, you have to stick with it, get everything you can out of it for as long as you can. You can't keep leaving it and coming back to it. Rick and Scott Steiner have been great together for a decade because they know the best chance they have for success is as a team. They're not going to try singles wrestling for a few years, then start teaming again if that doesn't work out. The Road Warriors walked away, came back, and now they've lost a lot of what they used to have. Of course, it's quite possible that they'll go ahead and win the WWF World tag team belts, because they're going up against a bunch of punks, but you put them up against the old Midnight Express or The Rock 'n' Roll Express; or definitely the Warriors of old, and there's nothing left to talk about. Too bad. They might be the best team ever, but there wouldn't have been any question about it had they stayed together all these years.

UNIONDALE, NY

Let me tell you something about ECW fans—most of them are beyond crazy, but they do love their sport and their promotion. ECW Arena is no place to bring your kids or that dame you just met down at the bank, unless she happens to smoke cigars and eat steak, but if you're looking for action and don't care much about style, it's the place to be. Throw



KRONUS SLAMS D-VON DUDLEY

down your money, grab a beer and a chair, and prepare to spend the rest of the night standing, because that's how it is in this place. Now, you take a man like John Kronus. Not a big man, but solid, strong, and fearless. His partner, Perry Saturn, hurt his knee, so Kronus defended the ECW tag belts on his own for a spell before losing to the Dudley boys. As for the Dudley punks, they seemed to get a big kick out of beating up on one man to win the tag belts and didn't seem to

PHILADELPHIA, PA

think much of Kronus' desire. Well, let them think what they want, because the people in ECW Arena appreciated what they were seeing. Philadelphia's a working man's town that has always appreciated its hardest-working athletes. Kronus fits the mold perfectly.

Like I said last time, doctors lie, and there's nothing you can do about it. They'll sit there and act like it's for your own good and whisper behind your back when all you're really asking for is the truth. How bad? How much time? What are the chances? Went for the blood work and X-rays the doctor told me I had to have, then called back a week later and asked for the results. "The doctor's not in now," said some batty old temp broad at the other end. "Well, can't you give me the results?"

NEW YORK, NY

I asked her. "I'm sorry, but they're confidential," she said. So the doctor calls back about an hour later and tells me, "Mr. Brock, I'd like you to come in so we can discuss this. I'll transfer you to my secretary and she'll set up an appointment." Before I had the chance to ask questions, the batty old temp broad was back on the phone telling me the first opening would be two weeks from today at 2 p.m. Fine. The way I figure it, if I was dying or had some kind of incurable disease, they'd want me in right away, right? Just do me one favor, readers, and I've never asked this before: Cross your fingers. □



**AHMED JOHNSON**

# CAN HE INSTILL MORALS IN THE NATION?



Photos by Bill Apter

Ahmed Johnson drops Headbanger Mosh chest-first onto a steel railing. Doesn't seem like the kind of thing a man trying to instill morals in the Nation of Domination would do, does it?

By Dave Lenker

**I**F, SIX MONTHS ago, Ahmed Johnson had made a list of things he thought might happen to him in 1997, joining the Nation of Domination certainly would not have been on it. Not even at the bottom of the list. He had been feuding with Faarooq (and later Faarooq's group) literally since the day the former Ron Simmons entered the WWF. He never sat around thinking, *Maybe it would be good for my career if I joined. Maybe I'd get ahead quicker.*

"It was the furthest thing from my mind," Johnson said. "But things change."

One of the changes was Nation of Domination leader firing Crush, Savio Vega, and manager Clarence Mason. That was a big deal to Johnson, who had feuded with Vega for a long time and been betrayed by him on the day Savio joined the NOD.

"I started looking at Faarooq differently," Johnson said. "I saw that the Nation could serve a purpose. And I saw that there might be some room for individuality in the Nation. That made a big difference to me."

The official turning point came when Johnson teamed with The Undertaker against Faarooq and Kama Mustafa on *Raw Is War*. Johnson never got into the match, and Kama pinned Undertaker. Afterward, with Faarooq, Kama, and D-Lo Brown watching from

**For months, Ahmed Johnson would have given the entire Nation of Domination a collective "Pearl River Plunge" if he had the chance.**

**Now he's a member—a member who apparently has a plan**





No, this isn't a picture of Ahmed helping Headbanger Thrasher to his seat. He's actually about to beat him up. He says the NOD can help people who have felt shunned. We'll see about that.

the ramp, Johnson rocked Undertaker with a "Pearl River Plunge," then joined the Nation.

The fans were shocked by Johnson's turn and have booed him loudly ever since, but there's reason to believe that all is not as it seems. Johnson, though now a member of this notorious group of bad guys, could very well turn out to be the moral voice of a clique that is still trying to find its way.

"The Nation of Domination

hasn't dominated the way it had hoped to," said WWF commentator Jim Ross. "At first, it looked like they were going to come in here and take over the WWF, but that hasn't happened, and when Faarooq fired Crush, Savio Vega, and Clarence Mason, we saw a few more cracks in their foundation. Undoubtedly, signing Ahmed Johnson and Kama Mustafa was a major achievement for Faarooq, and it indicates a possible change of direction for the group."

The change of direction could take the NOD down several possible routes. Many minority wrestlers have already viewed the Nation as a long-awaited opportunity for them to band together and assert their power. Numerous African-American wrestlers have long felt that they are less likely to get title matches than their white peers, but don't think their voices have been heard. The Nation could become a home for minority wrestlers who feel shunned.

Another possible avenue is for the Nation of Domination to become fan favorites and take on The New Hart Foundation, which has become the new symbol of arrogance and evil in the WWF. There's no doubt that the fans' attention has turned to the Harts, and so has Johnson's. The Harts interfered in several of his matches before he suffered a serious knee injury in June.

"Something needs to be done about them," Johnson admitted. "Yeah, I know what you're thinking, that I used to say the same thing about Faarooq, but this is different. This is one group that's threatening to overrun the entire federation and is insulting people just because they're American. We can do something about that. Let me tell you something, I used to think like everyone else that the Nation of Domination was after complete control of the WWF, but that doesn't have to be the case.



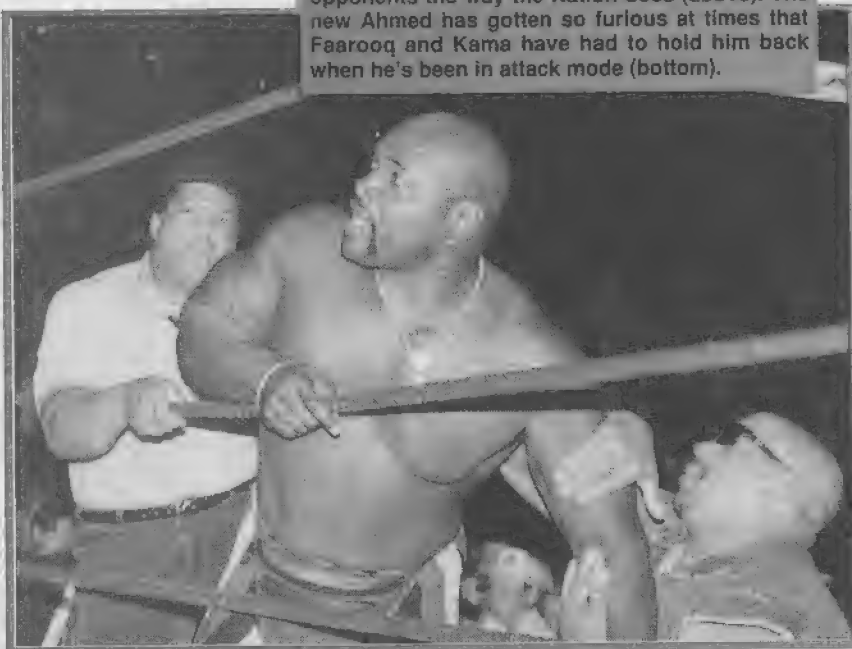
It would be difficult to imagine thousands of fans cheering for a group that viciously double-teams opponents the way the Nation does (above). The new Ahmed has gotten so furious at times that Faarooq and Kama have had to hold him back when he's been in attack mode (bottom).

People have to listen to our message. They don't have to hate us. We just want our fair share."

For Johnson, competing for the NOD's fair share might mean recruiting other minority wrestlers, such as Rocky Maivia, or a woman, such as Chyna.

But is this really all about race and fairness? A lot of wrestling people think the Nation of Domination is nothing but a poor man's NWO and that firing Vega, Crush, and Mason merely weakened the group. The group still seemingly has no moral center and is merely a group of wrestlers with different thoughts and philosophies; Johnson's arrival only added to this unproductive mosaic.

Faarooq refuted this theory and said that the NOD was "getting rid of some bad seeds, cutting off the rot, and turning us into a leaner, meaner fighting machine. There are no secrets here. We're just a bunch of angry men. Angry with the establishment and the lack of respect we've been getting."



Johnson said he is just anxious to help the NOD "become the best it can be.


"Faarooq's right—there are no secrets here," he said. "People can look at us in whatever way they want and they can say all they want about what I've done,

but everything's for a reason. Maybe the Nation of Domination took one step backward, but it has to take three steps forward. They were good before. Now we're great."

Johnson will have a major say in how much better they become. □



# NWO OR NOT:



**CURT  
HENNIG IS  
"HOLLYWOOD"  
HOGAN'S  
BIGGEST  
PROBLEM!**

By Steve Anderson

IT HAS ALREADY happened a few times since the New World Order was formed in July 1996: A wrestler or manager will show up unexpectedly on *WCW Monday Nitro* just to make things a little more interesting.

He won't necessarily get involved in the action right away, but he will make sure he gets on camera and gives people time to speculate about why he is there and, more importantly, who he is with.

Happened with Syxx, who made his first WCW appearance as a spectator in the crowd.

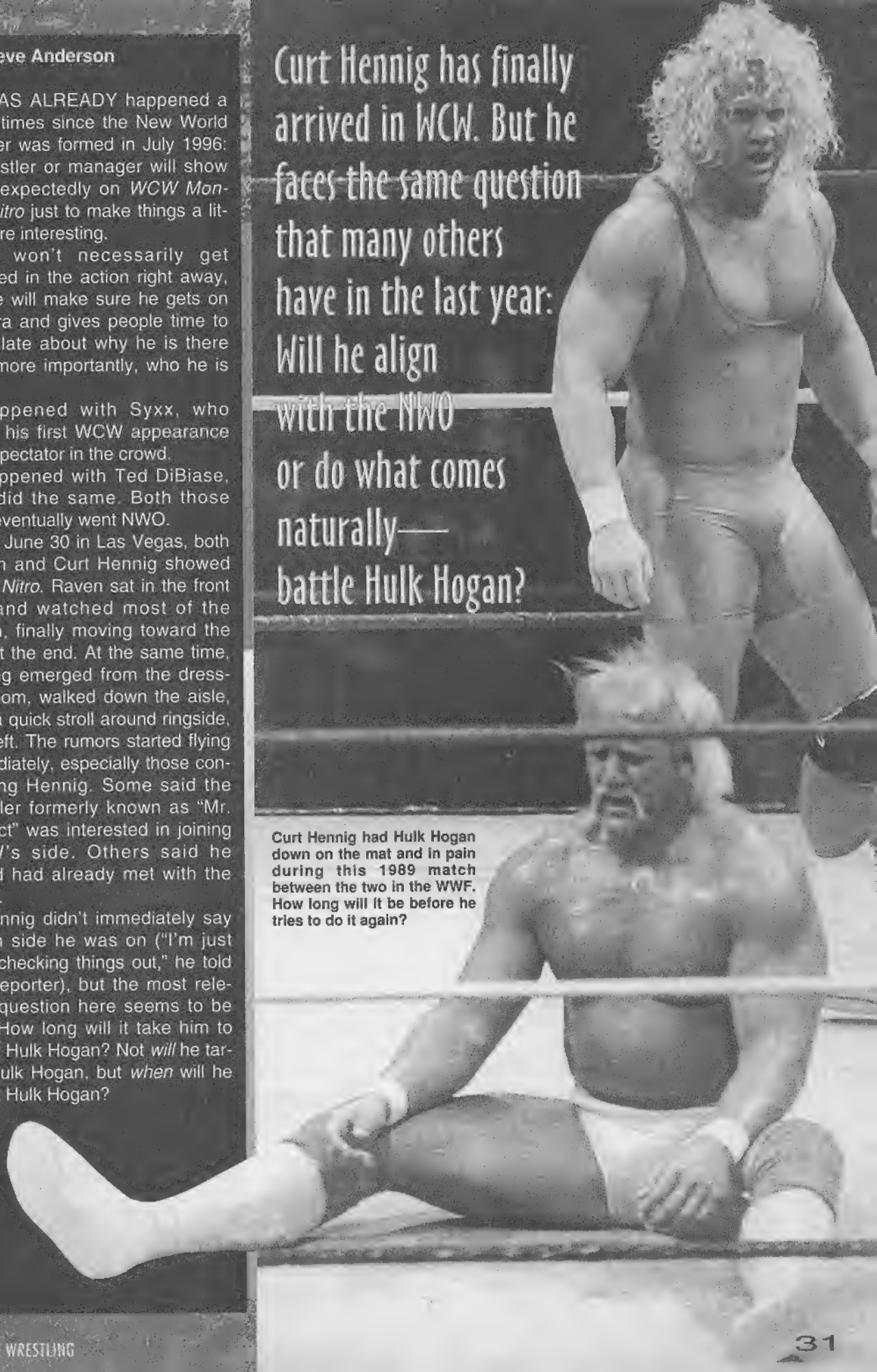
Happened with Ted DiBiase, who did the same. Both those men eventually went NWO.

On June 30 in Las Vegas, both Raven and Curt Hennig showed up at *Nitro*. Raven sat in the front row and watched most of the action, finally moving toward the ring at the end. At the same time, Hennig emerged from the dressing room, walked down the aisle, took a quick stroll around ringside, and left. The rumors started flying immediately, especially those concerning Hennig. Some said the wrestler formerly known as "Mr. Perfect" was interested in joining WCW's side. Others said he would have already met with the NWO.

Hennig didn't immediately say which side he was on ("I'm just here checking things out," he told one reporter), but the most relevant question here seems to be this: How long will it take him to target Hulk Hogan? Not *will* he target Hulk Hogan, but *when* will he target Hulk Hogan?

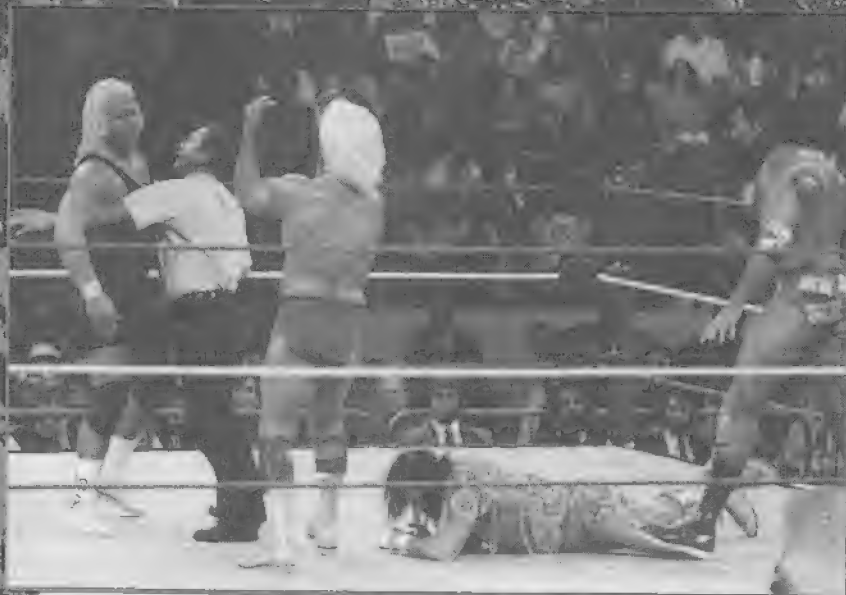
Curt Hennig has finally arrived in WCW. But he faces the same question that many others have in the last year: Will he align with the NWO or do what comes naturally—battle Hulk Hogan?

Curt Hennig had Hulk Hogan down on the mat and in pain during this 1989 match between the two in the WWF. How long will it be before he tries to do it again?





Bobby Heenan would probably like to get Hennig, a man he managed in the WWF (left), to join WCW's side, but the fact is, Hennig had his problems with Ric Flair, Randy Savage, and Scott Hall in the WWF (below), so he might still have enemies on both the WCW and NWO sides. But none greater than Hogan.



For "Hollywood" and his NWO, the acquisition of Hennig, should it happen, could seem like a dream come true for a while, but it would actually be more like a nightmare waiting to happen.

While the NWO has been the dominant group in WCW for the past 12 months, they always run the risk of becoming stagnant if they don't add new talent. Hennig has been out of the wrestling spotlight for many months, and out of action since 1993 with a back injury, his legacy still is fresh in the minds of fans. He is also still fresh in the memory of Hogan, who had a long feud with him in the WWF.

The NWO would certainly become stronger if Hennig joined.

After all, three of the group's top stars—Hogan, Scott Hall, and Kevin Nash—are brawlers. Syxx takes to the air with his attack. Hennig, one of the greatest scientific wrestlers in the WWF in the 1980s and early-1990s, would add balance. He is a mat wrestler who can tie an opponent up in a hold one instant and kayo him with one punch the next.

Hennig also is familiar with most members of the renegade wrestling organization. He formed a championship tag team with Scott Hall in the AWA, then feuded with him in the WWF. He established a temporary tandem with Randy Savage in the WWF, but also feuded with the "Macho Man." And he

feuded briefly with Nash in the WWF. Oh, yeah, and he knows Hogan rather well, too. With Hennig in the NWO, "Hollywood" would have one less superstar opponent about whom to worry.

Remember, the WWF feud between the two men was a vicious and personal one that saw Hennig at one point damage Hogan's WWF World title belt.

But joining WCW's side could be too easy for a man as intelligent and calculating as Hennig. Sure, if he did that, Hogan might be angry enough to instigate another feud with Hennig, maybe even offer him a title shot. Their past feud was never really settled and was one of the few in the WWF that Hogan did not completely dominate. Hogan's brawling clashes with Hennig's science. Shunning the NWO could clear a path to the WCW World title for Hennig. Hogan's ego has always overridden his sensibility.

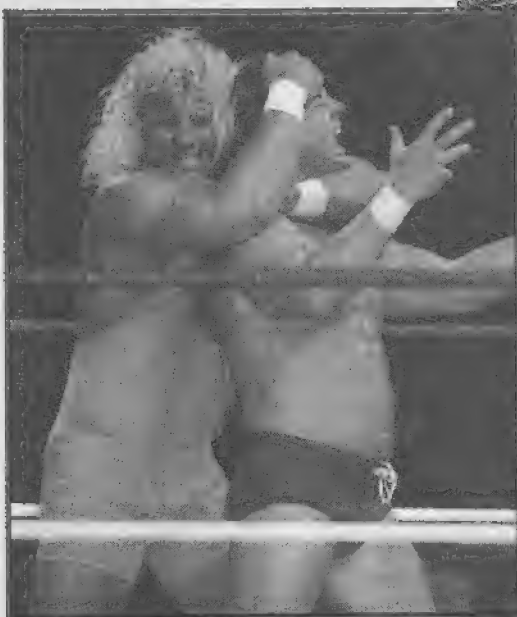
But if Hennig really wanted to not just beat Hogan, but humiliate him, he'd make him believe he was a good friend and NWO teammate, wait for just the right moment, and then strike!

For the better part of the last 10 years, Hennig has been a rule-breaker. Since the scrubbed-face scientific star turned bad, he has won one AWA World championship and two WWF Intercon-



Despite his long layoff from competition, Hennig is definitely good enough to beat Hogan. "Hollywood" has shown himself to be vulnerable to the sleeper hold in recent months.





Hennig could seek to renew old WWF rivalries with men such as Roddy Piper (left) and Ler Euger (right) now that he's in WCW. But even if he does join the NWO, there is no guarantee that he would do so "for life."



tinental championships. Simply put, Curt Hennig has had more success when he completely disregards the rules. Remember all the success he had as a fan favorite? Don't feel bad if you don't, because he didn't have that much at all. Hennig is great when he is bad.

And if Hennig is aware of that fact, WCW fans could be in for another long summer and fall ... and perhaps another year of the NWO beating up on tradition and the wrestlers of WCW.

But no matter how many times Hennig might flash the "NWO 4 Life" sign, Hennig would still remember the bitter feud with Hogan from days gone by. He might even remember all those days he spent as Intercontinental champ—even the days he *wasn't* feuding with Hogan—when Hogan overshadowed him and hogged the spotlight in the WWF. Would he really be willing to let "Hollywood" do that to him again, because make no mistake about it, that is what happens in the NWO? When Hogan's around, he is the show. And if he did, how long would it last?

Not very long at all.

Whether they know it or not, Curt Hennig and Hulk Hogan are destined to clash again. ☐

Scott Hall didn't trust Hennig during much of their time together in the WWF, and if he were smart, he wouldn't put too much trust in him now.





# WWF WAR ZONE

**Interfederation Battles Rock The Sport!**

What are ECW and USWA wrestlers doing on WWF TV shows? Causing quite a bit of trouble, sure, but also making the WWF a much more interesting federation



ECW's Tommy Dreamer has been involved in a lot of interfederational controversy. He attacked several USWA officials during a USWA telecast in June (opposite page, left) and has already battled Jerry Lawler in Memphis (above) and taken abuse from "The King" and Rob Van Dam in ECW (right).

By Liz Hunter

**W**EREN'T THEY ONCE the enemy? Years ago, when the whole wide wrestling world was clamoring—begging, really—for a match between WWF World champion Hulk Hogan and NWA World champion Ric Flair, a brawl to settle it all, weren't Vince McMahon and the WWF the only ones keeping it from ever happening? Weren't they the acknowledged enemies of interfederation matches—the big, rich, powerful WWF? The ones who acted like they were the only federation on this planet?

Yes, they were. Of course they were. But times have changes. Like, for instance, Hogan is now in

WCW, and WCW kicks the WWF's butt just about every Monday night when it comes to television ratings. Like, for instance, WCW has Hogan, Randy Savage, Sting, Lex Luger, The Giant, Flair, and a bunch of NFL football players, while the WWF is constantly fighting to hold on to what it has.

Philosophies change when you're no longer number one. What used to be unthinkable becomes a



reasonable consideration. Inter-federation matches, once the province of federations desperate for attention, become your trump card. A way to win those Monday night ratings battles. Maybe get a few outsiders on your side.

Several years ago, the WWF sent some of its stars to the USWA and the now-defunct Smoky Mountain Wrestling for limited appearances. In 1993, the Smoky Mountain tag team title was fought for—and won—at a WWF pay-per-view card. But nothing compares to what has happened this year in the WWF's growing affection for inter-federation influence.

Lawler convinced the WWF to send Tom "Zip" Prichard to ECW to take on his former WWF tag team partner, Chris "Skip" Candido. It was a terrific match. The WWF of old would not have done that.



Flash Funk (2 Cold Scorpio) and Sabu have wrestled each other many times, but their match on June 23 was special because Funk was representing the WWF, while Sabu was acknowledged by the WWF as an ECW superstar.



On February 24, viewers of *Raw Is War* were shocked to see ECW stars such as Stevie Richards, Taz, The Eliminators, The Blue Meanie, Sabu, and Tommy Dreamer appearing on the show. In May, ECW star Rob Van Dam became "Mr. Monday Night" when he wrestled on *Raw*. On June 7, Van Dam, Sabu, manager Bill Alfonso, and the WWF's Jerry Lawler attacked several ECW wrestlers during an ECW show in Philadelphia. A week later, ECW star Tommy Dreamer battled Lawler in Memphis.

A *Raw* in June featured an inter-federation battle between Brian Christopher of the USWA and Chris Candido of ECW. Interference was provided by Lawler, Van Dam, and ECW star Dreamer, who was there on Candido's behalf. And later in

the night, a match pitting Lawler and Van Dam against The Headbangers was tainted by the interference of ECW star The Sandman.

"Things are really getting a little interesting over there, aren't they?" Tommy Dreamer said. "It's about time. The WWF used to think it was the be all and end all, but now they've finally come around to realizing that isn't true. If you ask me, what's going on now was a long time coming, and it's only going to make the sport more interesting. It already has."

The WWF's intentions are obvious: It realizes it's losing the battle with WCW for Monday night ratings, so it has turned a one-on-one war into WCW

against the world. It's a brilliant marketing scheme: The WWF has recruited ECW and USWA fans to its side. Now, not only WWF fans are watching *Raw Is War*. Fans of ECW and USWA are tuning in, too.

The result? Everybody wins, except for WCW. The WWF wins, it hopes, with higher ratings. ECW and USWA win because they're getting unprecedented exposure and respect. The fans win because they're seeing the best of all worlds. Even the wrestlers win, because this increased competition forces them to be at their best.

"There is no down side," said INSIDE WRESTLING

Publisher Stu Saks, long a proponent of interfederation matches. "Unfortunately, it took a long time for the WWF's arrogance to get wiped away by reality, but finally the time has come and everybody's the better for it. Unfortunately, the one thing I think we'll never see is WWF vs. WCW interfederation matches. In fact, I think we're further away from that than ever before. The bad feelings between these two groups have intensified. Besides, Ted Turner didn't challenge Vince McMahon to a boxing match. He challenged (Fox Network head) Rupert Murdoch."

Wrestling analysts agree that the WWF must be careful about obliterating the line between it and the independent federations, lest fans believe ECW and USWA are equal in size, power, and quality to the WWF. That has always been the danger of interfederation matches, as the WWF kept telling us in the 1980s: Recognition means respect, which means putting yourself on the same level with federations that really aren't competitors. The WWF is trying to get the best of both worlds.

"They're using us and we're using them," said ECW's Paul E. Dangerously. "It's kind of a you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours situation, which is fine with us. But I don't think anybody is going to get confused by the difference between ECW and the WWF. It's a totally different style of wrestling and we have totally different fans. The good thing is that WWF fans who might be interested in us get exposed to ECW, while we juice up the action on WWF cards."

Like everyone else, Dangerously knows this wouldn't be happening if the WWF was as powerful as it used to be.

The rules have changed.

The WWF War Zone is getting bigger. □

Many people have said that Jerry Lawler (shown brawling with Dreamer outside the ring in Memphis) makes the WWF more interesting, but who would have thought he'd be the man to bring the WWF, ECW, and USWA together?



# NUEVA WORLD ORDER



Rey Mysterio Jr. has recorded some great victories over Juventud Guerrera recently (right), but wouldn't he better off forming a lasting alliance with him? Same with Konnan (against Dallas Page, left). Mysterio and Konnan haven't gotten along in a long time. It'd be in their best interests to make up.



# WCW MAY HAVE TO CONTEND WITH A UNIFIED MEXICAN FRONT!



**How's a team of Psicosis, La Parka, Juventud Guerrera, Konnan, and Super Calo sound? Unbeatable maybe? If they could only get along and get together!**

By Dave Rosenbaum

**R**EY MISTERIO JR. sat back in the chair in front of his locker and paged through the latest issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated Weekly*. He shook his head. His eyes followed his fingers up and down the two pages of results and after about five minutes, Misterio placed the newsletter on the table next to him and shook his head again.

"Look at this," he said to a reporter as he once again picked up his *PWI Weekly* and looked inside. "Tell me, what's wrong with this? Listen to these results: Super Calo defeated La Parka. Ultimo Dragon beat Psicosis by submission. Silver King, Psicosis, and Damian beat Ultimo Dragon, Juventud Guerrera, and Super Calo.

"Don't these guys speak the same language? Can't we communicate with each other? Gentlemen, we could be sitting on top of the next great power in professional wrestling and we don't even know it.

"The Mexican Mafia. Can you see it? It could be gigantic."

Misterio, a Southern Californian who started his



Psicosis dives onto Damian. He and manager Sonny Ono are too busy feuding with Ultimo Dragon to get involved in any *Nueva World Order*.

career in Mexico and wrestles in the Lucha Libre style, has wrestled most of the Mexicans in WCW and knows their style well. They are mostly small, but extremely talented with thrilling aerial attacks and tremendous courage. Individually, each man can count himself among the most exciting wrestlers in the world. As a whole, they'd be small but deadly ... and dangerous. A fast-paced wrestling machine like nobody has ever seen.

The *Nueva World Order*. Look out! Rey Misterio Jr., Super Calo, La Parka, Villano IV, Juventud Guerrera, Konnan, and Psicosis together in one *casa* would be phenomenal.

Unfortunately, Psicosis is feuding with Ultimo Dragon, a Japanese wrestler who trained in Mexico and is friends with Juventud Guerrera and Super Calo (who's feuding with La Parka). Misterio has feuded and teamed with Guerrera, but doesn't like Psicosis or Dragon and hasn't been happy with Konnan since he joined the *Dungeon of Doom*. The group is in pieces. As a result, only Misterio and Dragon have been successful, and even they are struggling now. At press time, none of them was ranked in the WCW top 10 and that, says Chris Jericho, is a shame.

"There's a lot of pride there, and a lot of talent, too," Jericho said. "If they could just put their pride aside for the good of the group, man, what a group



Great wrestler, that La Parka. He has plenty of terrific high-risk moves. Too bad he's not getting anywhere in WCW. He might if he had a big group to support him.

that would be! This *Nueva World Order*, if that's what you guys want to call it, is young, talented, and at the peak of their games. I could easily see them taking over."

According to Ultimo Dragon, there has been some talk among these wrestlers about bonding together and working as a unit. But, as Dragon pointed out, "I wouldn't want to work with Sonny Ono, and I'm not feeling too good about Psicosis right now."

Responded Psicosis: "Any team he's on, I'm not, so you can end the talk right there."

Too bad, said Juventud Guerrera. They could be awesome.

"Yeah, it's something I've thought about and even talked about with some of the other Mexicans, but for now, it doesn't seem too likely," Guerrera said. "Everybody's too caught up in their own business, their own little feuds and problems, and I guess you can say it hasn't amounted to anything for any of us. The shame of it all is that Mexican wrestlers are finally following in Mil Mascaras' footsteps and getting respect in the United States, and here's our chance to really do something with it."

Asked whether the *Nueva World Order* has any chance of happening, Guerrera said, "A chance? Sure, why not, but not now. We're not even close. What has to happen, if you ask me, is that Mexicans have to stop wrestling Mexicans."

One of the Mexican wrestlers, who refused to be identified for publication, said "WCW likes us wrestling each other. They want Mexicans



Super Calo has one of the most unusual wrestling outfits of anyone in the world. But he is just one of many Mexicans getting buried in preliminary matches.

wrestling Mexicans. What we have to do is not go along with it."

Several long-time wrestling officials in Mexico were thrilled that Ultimo Dragon vs. Psicosis was a featured event at The Great American Bash pay-per-view, but disappointed that the two didn't shake hands before or after the match. Mascaras, who

watched the match from home, said he was proud to see Dragon and Psicosis wrestle, "but I'd much rather see them wrestle together, on the same team. That would be good for them and even better for the people of Mexico."

The *Nueva World Order* could follow the lead of the WWF's Nation of Domination (see story on page 26), which could be turning into a haven for minority wrestlers. In the *Nueva's* case, they would demand title matches, help each other out, and perhaps go head-to-head with the New World Order.

"It would be great to prove that skill and smarts can overcome brawn," Guerrera said. "That is what Mexican wrestling is all about."

But until the *Nueva* is formed, Mexican wrestling in the United States is all about one Mexican fighting another and the common good never being served. It's time for Mexico to do something good for Mexico. □



The Psicosis-Misterio feud has been fought in about a half-dozen federations. Misterio, at least, is starting to realize that the Mexican wrestlers are spending too much time battling each other.



# HOTSEAT

## CHRIS CANDIDO

### "SKIP MY PAST—I HAVE A FUTURE"

**C**ERTAINLY YOU remember Skip and Zip, The Bodydonnas, who held the WWF World tag team title for 11 weeks last year. Well, Chris Candido would like for you to forget about them. Make believe they never existed. He's looking ahead.

Candido would be the first to admit that his past wasn't entirely sparkling. Known as a whiner during his days in Smoky Mountain Wrestling, he became one of the few wrestlers to play second fiddle to his manager when he took on Tammy Fytch. When Fytch took a job as a commentator on WWF telecasts, Candido followed, and the newly named duo of Skip (Candido) and Sunny (Fytch) immediately became hated around the federation. Later, Sunny teamed Skip with Zip (Tom Prichard) and called them The Bodydonnas. They won the WWF tag belts.

Sunny, it turned out, was not a loyal friend. The Bodydonnas lost the belts to Henry and Phineas Godwinn, who soon lost them to The Smokin' Gunns, and Sunny followed the gold both times. The Bodydonnas slumped and eventually broke up. Candido moved on to ECW. Recently, he wrestled one of his idols, ECW heavyweight champion Terry Funk, and formed

the Triple Threat with Shane Douglas and Bam Bam Bigelow. He even returned to the WWF for one match and battled USWA star Brian Christopher.

Candido admits that he has made mistakes in the past, but says he's looking ahead to a bright future. He, by the way, remains friendly with Sunny, who often sits in the balcony for his ECW matches. "He didn't appear any calmer than he was in the past when I spoke to him, but I think his head is on straighter," reported Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum, who spoke with Candido after a card in Philadelphia.

---

**"I know exactly what I'm doing. You know what they say, those who forget the past are damned to repeat it ..."**

---

**Q:** Thank you for your time, Chris, although I must say, time seems to be the one thing you have in abundance.

**A:** What's that supposed to be, some kind of wisecrack?

**Q:** No, simply an observation. Your schedule isn't as busy as it was during your WWF days ...

**A:** Are we gonna sit here and go over the past?

**Q:** Well ...

**A:** Well, nothing. Skip my past—I have a future.

**Q:** Skip your past? Skip your past? Skip?

**A:** What are you talking about?

**Q:** Skip.

**A:** Oh.

**Q:** It kind of haunts you, doesn't it?

**A:** Doesn't haunt me at all. I'm proud that I was a WWF World tag team champion. How many wrestlers win a world title?

**Q:** Okay, you're right about that. But about Skip ...

**A:** Forget about it. We're not talking about Skip today.

**Q:** How about Sunny?

**A:** Sunny's fine. I see her all the time. We're good friends. Great friends. Things have worked out for us.

**Q:** You hold no grudges against her?

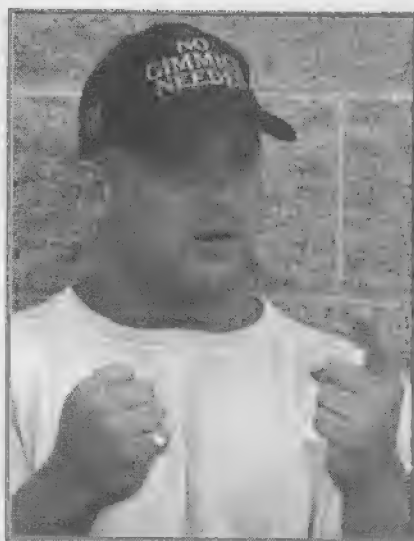
**A:** Grudges? Why?

**Q:** Wow, you do have a short memory. Remember? She dumped you for a couple of hillbillies? Then she dumped them for The Smokin' Gunns?

**A:** Yeah, I remember, but what good does it do for me to rehash that? What good is it

A black and white photograph of a man from the chest up. He is wearing a dark baseball cap with the words "NO GIMMICK NEEDED" printed in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The man has a beard and is wearing a light-colored t-shirt. The background is a textured, mottled grey.

NO  
GIMMICK  
NEEDED



**"Bret Hart wishes he could do in his career what Terry Funk has done. Funk's the ECW champion. Soon I'm gonna be the champion."**

gonna do me? I've forgotten the past.

**Q:** Yeah, but has Sunny forgotten the past?

**A:** What does it matter? This is now. That was then ...

**Q:** Sounds like a good title for a book, only backward.

**A:** Listen, I know what you writers think about me. You think I'm some kind of clown who doesn't know what he's doing half the time. Well, it ain't true. I know exactly what I'm doing. You know what they say, those who forget the past are damned to repeat it ...

**Q:** You just told me that you've forgotten the past.

**A:** Well, that's not what I meant. I mean that I've learned from my mistakes.

**Q:** It seems to me that dressing up like Terry Funk and imitating him while you wrestle him is a new mistake.

**A:** Not a mistake. I've got a lot of respect for Terry Funk. He's one of the best there ever was, one of the best there ever will be.

**Q:** Sounds like you're talking about Bret Hart.

**A:** Bret Hart? Bret Hart wishes he could do in his career what Terry Funk has done. Funk's the ECW champion. Soon I'm gonna be the ECW champion.

**Q:** You're gonna beat Funk?

**A:** If that's what it takes.

**Q:** But you haven't so far. What's going to change?

**A:** What's going to change is that I'm gonna win and he's gonna lose, that's what.

**Q:** Okay, I'm glad you cleared that up. What you're saying is that

instead of losing, you're going to win, and instead of winning, he's going to lose.

**A:** Exactly.

**Q:** Do you love Sunny?

**A:** What?

**Q:** Do you love Sunny? You know, love. L-O-V-E.

**A:** Yeah, I love Sunny, like a friend.

**Q:** And what else?

**A:** What else is there? Listen, Sunny's one part of my life, the ECW title is another, the Triple Threat is another. We're tough, me, Shane, and Bam Bam.

**Q:** I hate to say this, but some people might say that this is a classic example of misery loves company.



Chris Candido lands a punch to the chest of Rob Van Dam, an ECW wrestler who doesn't think much of his home promotion. Though Candido is a former WWF tag team champ, he seems loyal to ECW now.





In recent months, Candido has wrestled both former ECW champ Raven (above) and current champ Terry Funk (below). He expects to have that title in his possession soon.



**A:** Who says that?

**Q:** Well, okay, I say that.

**A:** Well, you're stupid. You know what that is? Stupid. S-T-U-P-I-D. Stupid. Douglas

has held every title there is in this federation. He's "The Franchise." The Bammer's one of the best that ever lived ...

**Q:** The Bammer? I never heard that.

**A:** Well, you don't know everything, do you?

**Q:** I know that you and Shane Douglas have argued in the past.

**A:** In the past. There you go again, always dredging up the past. We used to argue. We don't argue anymore. Tell me, when's the last time you saw Shane

Douglas and Chris Candido arguing?

**Q:** Just a few weeks ago, I believe.

**A:** And it'll be a long time before it happens again, too. We don't argue anymore. We see eye-to-eye on just about everything. This group, we're as tough as they come.

**Q:** Were you surprised that Tommy Dreamer interfered for you in that WWF match against Brian Christopher?

**A:** Surprised? No. I knew he was there.

**Q:** And ...

**A:** And he was just looking out for one of his ECW boys. The thing is, in ECW, we fight like the devil when we're in the ring. We'd kill to win. But we're one big, strong group. When an outsider beats up on one of us, we help our ECW boy. That's the way it is. Jerry Lawler and Rob Van Dam stuck their noses where they didn't belong. Tommy Dreamer helped out.

**Q:** So what does the future hold for you?

**A:** It's about time. Like I said, I'm going to be the ECW champion. Maybe someday I'll find a



**"In ECW, we fight like the devil ... We'd kill to win. But we're one big, strong group. When an outsider beats up on one of us, we help our ECW boy."**

new teammate, go back to the WWF, and win the World tag team championship again. Maybe Sunny will join me, maybe she won't. You know these women. They've got minds of their own.

**Q:** Yeah, I know. It's a new concept. We have this woman in our office, Brandi Mankiewicz. She has a mind of her own, too.

**A:** Life's tough, ain't it?

**Q:** And then you die.

**A:** Sunny's a good woman. A great woman. Maybe one of these days we'll get together.

**Q:** And get married?


**A:** Heck, who knows. There's no accounting for taste.

**Q:** No, there isn't. Well, Chris, thanks for not discussing your past. I look forward to your future.

**A:** Thanks, Rosenbaum, and good night. □

# The Ultimate

## WHY DAN SEVERN CAN'T BE DETHRONED!



NWA champion Dan Severn finished off Devon Storm with an armbar, and part of Storm had to be glad it was over. He couldn't use his high-risk moves the way he wanted to, and that was so frustrating.

Photos by Timothy A. Walker

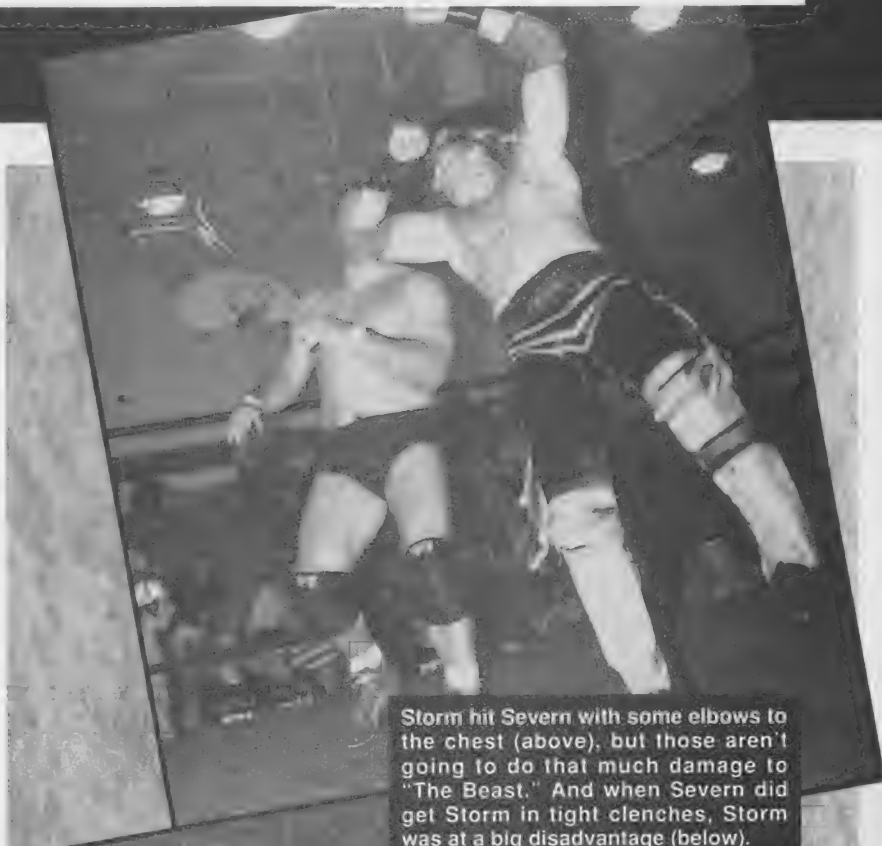
# Frustration

**If a challenger is going to beat Dan Severn, it's going to have to be at Severn's game. Because when a match goes airborne, Severn isn't likely to follow**

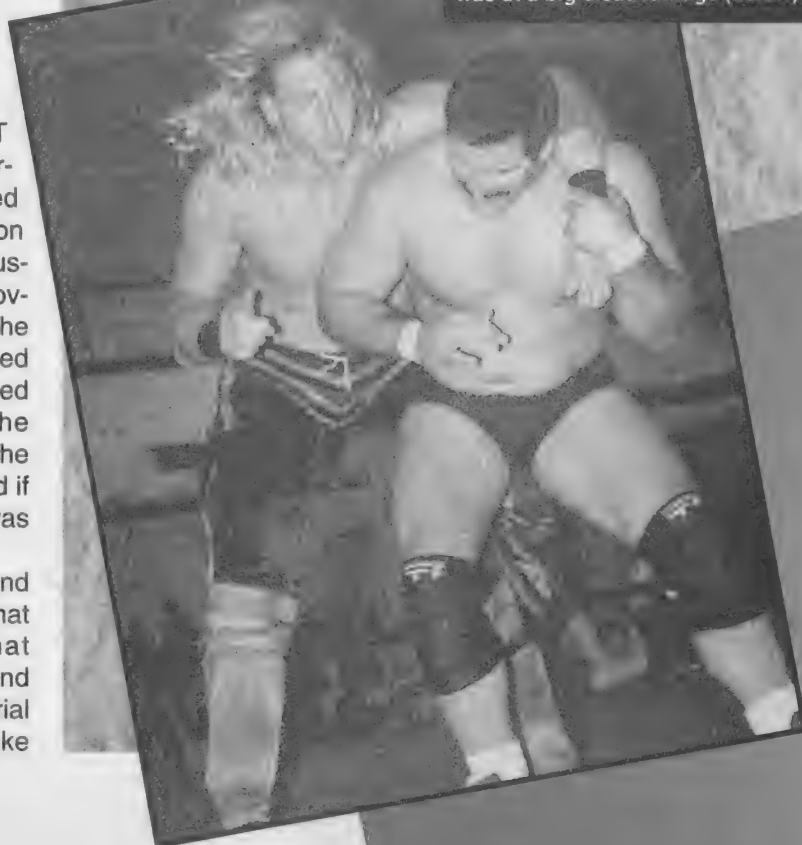
**By Dave Rosenbaum**

**D**EVON STORM THOUGHT a lot of himself and his aerial style before he stepped into the ring with NWA champion Dan Severn. Maybe the most frustrating night of his life. He discovered just how meaningless all the moves he had learned and honed to perfection could be when faced with the right opponent. Or the wrong opponent. By the end of the night, Storm wouldn't have cared if he never saw Severn again. It was that bad.

Storm went into the match and his big NWA title shot figuring that the best way to beat a mat wrestler like Severn is to ground him. Hit him with all kinds of aerial moves. Launch an air attack like



Storm hit Severn with some elbows to the chest (above), but those aren't going to do that much damage to "The Beast." And when Severn did get Storm in tight clutches, Storm was at a big disadvantage (below).







Smashing Severn's head into a ringside table—that worked for Storm (above). But Severn's punishing kicks can really take a lot out of a man (below).



nothing anyone had seen before. Beat on his face and upper body with dropkicks. Hit him with a moonsault. Throw in a "Frankensteiner" here and there. Keep the match moving fast. Try about 30 high-risk maneuvers, hope to land about 20, and figure that will be enough to win you the match.

Maybe it would have, but Severn refused to take the bait.

"He must think I'm stupid," snapped Severn, a former Ultimate Fighting champion. "I've faced men with tons more experience than he had, and I've dealt with them. He's a terrific wrestler with a great future, but what did he expect me to do, chase him around the ring? No way! That, my friends, is exactly how a mat wrestler loses to an aerial wrestler, and that wasn't going to happen to this mat wrestler.

"You want to know the truth? This might sound arrogant, but it's a fact. The ring is big enough so that a mat wrestler never has to lose to an aerial wrestler, unless he makes all the mistakes. It's not a matter of how much risk the aerial wrestler is taking. It's a matter of how bad I allow myself to be."

It so happens that mat wrestler Severn is the heavyweight champion of a federation in which some of the best wrestlers, like Ace Darling and Reckless Youth, attack from the air. This combination seemingly makes Severn unbeatable, or as close to that as a wrestler can come.

The Storm-Severn match was an exercise in frustration for the challenger. Few of Storm's high-risk moves landed because Severn, for the most part, was careful to stay out of target range and wait for his opportunity. He did connect with one "Frankensteiner," hit Severn with a slide kick under the ropes while Severn was outside the ring, and clothesline Severn after propping him up on a chair, but that was about it.

Storm, the challenger, had no choice but to be the aggressor (and thus go to the air), while Severn could have waited for the time limit to expire if he had wished. That's the advantage of being champion; you don't have to win by pinfall or submission. You can wait for time to expire or lose by disqualification and you're still champion. It's the perfect situation for a wrestler of Severn's style.

"Exactly," Severn agreed. "That's why aerial wrestlers usually have pretty short title reigns. You look at some of the long-term champions in wrestling history, like Bruno Sammartino, Bob Backlund, Ric Flair, and Lou Thesz, and what do they all have in common? All mat wrestlers. They kept it simple. No high-risk stuff. That's the way to do it. Be smart. Wait for your opportunity."

Storm kept waiting and waiting. A few times he taunted Severn to come closer, but the champion just ignored him.

"I wasn't sure what to do there for a while," Storm said. "It's really tough. I mean, I'm trying to do all my best moves, but he won't wrestle with me. He's just hanging back and waiting for the match to come to him, which I guess is smart, but it doesn't seem all that champion-like to me. I thought he should have come after me a few times, but he didn't."

The match ended shortly after Severn suplexed Storm over the top rope and through a table. He rolled him back in and won when he clamped on an armbar to which Storm submitted. Later, in the locker room area, NWA North American champion Reckless Youth boasted that the result would have been different had he wrestled Severn, but offered no convincing evidence.

"I guess I'd do a lot of the same



There were times in this match when Storm had no choice but to try to stand toe-to-toe with Severn. That was the NWA champion's goal: Make this a slower-paced bout fought on the mat and in the middle of the ring.

things Storm did, but better," said Reckless Youth, whose name is the best reason he could never beat Severn. "Storm was missing too often. You can't take too many chances."

Many experts think that Severn, with his vast amateur background and UFC experience, is too good for the younger, less-experienced wrestlers in the NWA. They think he'd find better competition in the WWF, possibly from his old UFC rival Ken Shamrock. The WWF is home to some of the finest mat

wrestlers in the world, including Bret Hart, Davey Boy Smith, and Steve Austin, and none of them would engage Severn in an aerial war. They'd test him on the ground.

"I like a challenge," Severn insisted. "I'm willing to take on anything they throw at me. But, you know, wrestling high flying guys is a challenge, too. It's a test of wills. I have to control myself and not get involved in something that's not in my own best interests." □

The telephone wires sizzle each month, as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. Here's the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to feel the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off ... One On One

**H**ENRY AND PHINEAS Godwinn appear to be the perfect tag team. They're cousins, for one, and grew up together in Biggers, Arkansas, about 120 miles north of Little Rock. They understand each other, which is more than anyone else can say, and they've been successful. In 1996, Henry and Phineas were able to capture the WWF World tag team belts.

For a long time, this was a fun-loving team that got along well with each other and with the fans. They genuinely enjoyed what they were doing, as was made obvious by their pre-match and postmatch square-dancing exhibitions.

But the fun stopped when Henry broke a vertebra during a tag team match against The Road Warriors this spring. Doctors said Henry was lucky he didn't wind up paralyzed, but within a few months, he was back in the ring.

Yet something had changed. Henry wasn't the carefree man he used to be. The dancing stopped. The hobnobbing with the fans stopped. Henry became deadly serious. Phineas didn't want to change, and that's where problems arose.

Phineas still wants to dance. Henry doesn't want him to dance. Phineas wants to shake hands with and high-five the fans. Henry doesn't want to deal with the fans. Phineas likes to take the attitude that if the team loses, there's always the next match. Henry, perhaps shaken by the fragility of life, doesn't want to hear about tomorrow. He's concentrating on today.

Recently, Phineas might have cost himself a victory over Hunter Hearst Helmsley when he turned his

attention away from Helmsley and kissed Chyna. Helmsley caught Phineas with his "pedigree" and won the match. Then Henry ran to ringside and berated Phineas for averting his attention from the task at hand.

Make no mistake, the Godwinns aren't on the verge of a breakup. But their differences were obvious when we brought them together ... "One On One."

**PHINEAS GODWINN:** Hey, what's up, cousin? Where ya been all day?

**HENRY GODWINN:** Nowhere. Why? What's up with you?

**PG:** Well, I don't know. These nice people here at INSIDE WRESTLING brought us together and I reckon they want us to talk about somethin'.

# ONE ON ONE



**"Deep down inside, I get real sad when I hear them people booing me. I know you say it doesn't matter, but it makes me feel bad."**

**—Phineas Godwinn**

Don't really know about what.

**HG:** Don't you have any idea?

**PG:** No. Why? Should I?

**HG:** Well, maybe it has somethin' to do with that match you lost back a few weeks ago.

**PG:** Which one you talkin' about?

**HG:** Yeah, exactly. Which one? I'm talkin' about that match against Helmsley.

**PG:** So what about it? What's that got to do with you?

**HG:** First of all, you're my cousin and my teammate. I care about you. Second of all, this whole thing is gettin' out of hand. Why'd you have to go and kiss that lady?

**PG:** Lady? You mean Chyna? I don't know. I guess she was just standin' there lookin' all pretty and I figured I'd do it. Heck, I gave her a nice, big, wet sloppy one!



# N ONE



**"We gotta get down to business every night. We can't be dancing and talking to the fans no more. We gotta think about winning matches and that's it."**

**—Henry Godwinn**

**HG:** Yeah, and you lost the match.

**PG:** But I got a kiss!

**HG:** Who cares if you got a kiss? You were in there to wrestle, not have a date with some ol' lady who's tied up with Helmsley, anyway. What you do that for?

**PG:** I told you, she was pretty and she was there.

**HG:** You know, Phineas, that's the whole problem these days. You can't take nothin' serious.

**PG:** Hey, since when are you Mr. Straight Face?

**HG:** Since you know when. Since my accident. We been through this. You gotta realize, Phineas, life is short.

**PG:** I do realize that, cousin. That's why I still want to have some fun. Heck, like you said, life is short, so drink it up! You tell me we gotta

be meaner if we're gonna win them title belts back, and I been doin' like you say, but sometimes I miss bein' around the fans and dancing with them.

**HG:** Don't you wanna accomplish anything?

**PG:** Accomplish anything? What's that got to do with it? I accomplished plenty. We were the WWF tag team champions before. We're wrestling for the biggest wrestling organization in the world.

**HG:** And you think we're still gonna be gettin' big matches if we keep havin' fun and losin' the way we have? What I'm saying is, Phineas, we gotta get down to business every night. We can't be dancing and talking to the fans no more. We gotta think about winning matches and that's it.

**PG:** I think about that all the time.

**HG:** But I still believe you're thinkin' about kissing girls.

**PG:** And lookin' at 'em, too. You forgot.

**HG:** No, I didn't forget nothin'. I remembered that time with that girl Sunny ...

**PG:** We still on that?

**HG:** Yeah, we're still on that, 'cause you ain't got past it yet. You had to stare at her buns and we end up losin' the tag team title because of it.

**PG:** She's mean, but she is real pretty.

**HG:** You think a lot a girls are pretty, Phineas. You just gotta learn to control yourself and keep your mind on your business when you're in the ring. I'm still afraid you're not seein' things my way.

**PG:** Well ...

**HG:** Well, nothing. That's all there is to it.

**PG:** You know somethin', cousin? You ain't much fun anymore.

**HG:** Ain't much fun? No, I ain't much fun when we lose a match and you're actin' like we just won the Indy 500 or somethin'.

**PG:** We wouldn't have got this far without the fans.

**HG:** Yeah, I agree, they pay their money and pay our salaries, but there's more to it than that. You think they're gonna like us if we don't start winning?

**PG:** I think they'd still like us now if we were nice to them.

**HG:** No, the fans like winners, Phineas, and we didn't win enough matches when they loved us.

**PG:** Oh, so it's all my fault?

**HG:** No, but we gotta get down to some serious business. It's time.

**PG:** Okay, cousin, I guess we gotta do things your way, but I still don't like it. Deep down inside, I get real sad when I hear them people booing me. I know you say it doesn't matter, but it makes me feel bad.

**HG:** If you don't see things my way, we're gonna end up diggin' ditches or milkin' cows real soon, I can tell you that. □

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## Sincerely Yours

(Continued from page 5)

watch him drop from the ceiling only to stand there with his bat and not wrestle?

Okay, so both the fans and WCW hurt Sting by thinking he was a member of the NWO. That was months ago, and even my kids don't hold grudges that long. Sting needs to stop sulking and only half-heartedly fending off the NWO. He needs to get back in the ring, speak his mind, and beat the pulp out of "Hollywood" Hulk Hogan. Otherwise, his popularity will start dropping faster than he does when he comes down from the ceiling.

KAREN BEARSLEY  
Palo Alto, CA

### OFF THEIR PEDESTAL

Instead of wasting their time paging through magazines, Rick and Scott Steiner should spend more time honing their skills so they can take the World tag team straps from Scott Hall and Kevin Nash ("The Steiners Rip The Lid Off INSIDE WRESTLING! 'You Guys Blew It!'" August 1997). It seems as if they are quick to complain that their short-lived title reign wasn't recognized by this magazine, but they forget that the title reign was declared invalid by then-WCW Senior Vice President Eric Bischoff. Their protest was legitimate, but what have they done recently to try to get the belts back? By now, if they were truly the best team in WCW, they could have somehow won them.

There was a time not too long ago when I considered the Steiners the top tag team in the world. Now I'm not so sure. They must win the World tag team belts before I put them back up on a pedestal.

ERIN CALLOWAY  
St. Louis, MO

### TRIBUTE TO A LEGEND

I find it amazing that Eddie Gilbert has inspired such great tributes since his untimely death in 1995 ("Eddie Woulda Loved It!" August 1997). He was always a favorite of mine, and I find it heartening that his memory lives on in what he loved most: violent, bloody matches. With all of today's fans yearning for more blood and gore, I just smile to myself and think back to Eddie every time I see a bloody face in a magazine. Eddie may not have invented what we know as hardcore wrestling, but he was definitely a pioneer.

I hope these tribute shows keep occurring every year and that Eddie's legacy won't be forgotten. That way the younger fans won't think that the ultraviolent style that permeates wrestling today only started with ECW.

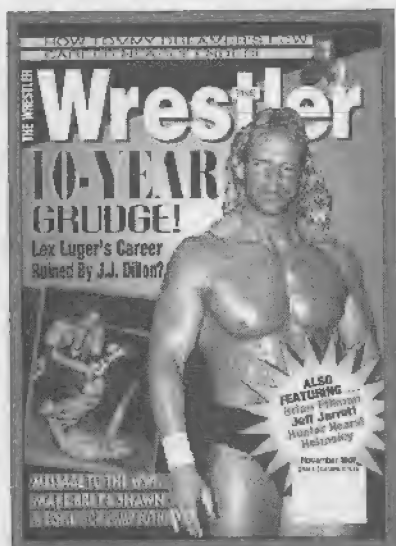
DANIEL HERMAN  
Roanoke, VA ☐



Eddie Gilbert sprays Tracey Smothers with a fire extinguisher during a November 1994 match. Reader Daniel Herman is glad to see certain federations still paying tribute to "Hot Stuff," who died in 1995.

# This Month In...

## Wrestler



**LEX LUGER** can't get a shot at the WCW World title, but who's to blame for this? **HULK HOGAN**? Maybe. But could **J.J. DILLON** also be conspiring against Lex? Is it possible he has held a grudge against him for 10 years? ... The feud between **BRET HART** and **SHAWN MICHAELS** went too far for our tastes when the two men got into a brawl inside a dressing room. We say it's time the WWF forced them to wrestle each other—or dumped them both! ... We know **TOMMY DREAMER** hates **RAVEN**, but what was he thinking when he risked it all to send him to WCW two months early?

All this—and much more!—  
in the November 1997 issue of  
*The Wrestler*

**NOW ON SALE!**



**J.J. DILLON** would probably love to strip **HULK HOGAN** of the WCW World title right now, but he's not sure if it would be the right thing to do. So he's leaving the decision up to you, the fans. Vote today! ... **JERRY LAWLER**, **ROB VAN DAM**, and **SABU** are doing pretty well in their war with the rest of ECW, but our investigation has concluded that there is a high-level ECW player in on this conspiracy ... Have you been to a good independent card recently? There are plenty out there, and you won't want to miss our 1997 guide to the independents!

All this—and much more!—  
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## On The Road

(Continued from page 10)

victory and pointed out that, at four days, it was the shortest retirement on record.

"Contracts, honey," Madusa said, looking considerably surprised and perturbed to see me. "Stipulations are stipulations. Contracts are legal. I wasn't going to start messing around with the German legal system."

"So you're retired?" I asked.

"Yes, in the United States. In Germany, I'm retired when this tour is over. By the way, what are you doing in Germany?"

"I came to see if you were really wrestling."

"Are you kidding?" she said. "All you had to do was pick up the phone. I would've told you."

It turned out that coming to Germany wasn't such a bad idea. Since my only assignment was to check on Madusa, that left me with three days to see the sights, try out the Germany cuisine, and drive through the countryside. I felt special driving my rented Mercedes on Germany's high-speed highways, until I realized that just about everyone else was driving a Mercedes. Two days after Hamburg, I was in Obenhausen, near Dusseldorf, for another WCW card that also featured Madusa against her long-time rival Luna Vachon.

"How do you think Akira Hokuto and Sonny Ono would feel about you still wrestling?" I asked Madusa before the match.

"Who cares?" Madusa said. "They wanna pay my legal fees? I'll do what I have to do. Then I'll do what I promised I'd do, which is retire. I'm a woman of my word, but that doesn't mean I'm through with that pair."

Once again, Madusa's injured knee looked fairly stable and she wrestled with verve in pinning Vachon for the second straight time. I mentioned to Madusa after the card that she didn't look like a woman who was ready to retire.

"You rubbing it in, Dave?" Madusa said. "Well, I'm not, but I



Madusa wrestled courageously against Akira Hokuto numerous times, but she couldn't figure out a way to beat her, not even with her career on the line. At least she can say she didn't hang on too long.

have to. But who knows? Things sometimes work themselves out."

They were working out fine for me as I walked a few blocks to my hotel and settled in for a short night's sleep before catching my flight the next morning. Somehow, this working road trip was refreshing, unlike my trips to Tokyo and Atlanta the month before. Madusa's excuses for wrestling made perfect sense, and it was nice to watch this outstanding female athlete, still in her prime, wrestle for what might have been the last time.

Athletes don't always go out at the top of their games. Maybe this was a good thing for Madusa ... and the rest of us. □

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## Behind the Door

(Continued from page 12)



Japan's Riki Choshu (shown against Tiger Jeet Singh) will wrestle his final match on January 4, 1998 ... unless, of course, he remembers he has commitments in Germany after that.

female wrestler, but here's what I'll always remember best about her. One night, she was wrestling in a high school gym near New Haven, Connecticut. I walked into the locker room hoping to do an interview. Madusa was undressed. Stark naked.

"Poor boy," Madusa sighed.

That's what I'll remember most about Madusa. Not that she was naked, but her reaction to me seeing her naked. "Poor boy?" What did that mean? She wrapped a towel around her body and answered a few questions, but she never stopped smirking.

That was also the night the two teenage girls who were Rock 'n' Roll Express fans begged me to walk into the locker room and tell Robert Gibson and Rick Morton that they were outside waiting.

"Do they know you?" I asked.

"No," they said.

"Well, I can't do that."

"Why not?"

"It's unprofessional. I can't pass along your messages."

"What's unprofessional?" one of them asked.

Another time in New Jersey, I walked in on Abdullah the Butcher getting dressed. That's a sight you simply do not want to see. When he noticed me, Abdullah grunted, lifted a flap of fat beneath his armpit, and rubbed on some deodorant. I walked out thinking, *I didn't know Abdullah cared about personal hygiene.*

I know one person who cared about personal hygiene: Dark Journey. I was taking photos at ringside one night in Philadelphia when Dark Journey was managing one of her wrestlers. The first thing I noticed was that she was more beautiful in person than she was on TV. The second thing I noticed was that she was wearing perfume. To manage a wrestling match.

Craig DeGeorge. Remember him? A bunch of years ago, he was a TV announcer in the WWF. He's working in south Florida now as a sportscaster.

Like I said, short attention span. Speaking of retirement, Japan's Riki Choshu announced his plans to wrestle his final match on January 4, 1998. Choshu decided he had won enough championships in his illustrious career and hopes to become a trainer for New Japan after his final match. So far, there's been nothing about whether Choshu plans on touring Germany after his retirement.

Now here's the really big news of recent months: ECW vs. USWA at the WWF's *Raw Is War*. Unbelievable. Never thought I'd see the day. This tells me one thing: Vince McMahon and the WWF are desperate. They're losing the ratings battle with WCW on Monday nights and are desperate to try anything, even getting involved with lesser competition. You know what the old Vince McMahon would have said about this? He would've said, "What's this ECW? What's the USWA? Who cares about ECW and the USWA? Never heard of them."

But you know what? Even though I have a feeling this is going to be bad for the WWF, it's good for the rest of us. Why? Three reasons.

1. Who cares about the WWF's bank account?

2. Interfederation matches are fun.

3. Maybe the WWF will learn a lesson about being so damn self-righteous and short-sighted.

By the way, I didn't mean to make light of Stan Stasiak's death. The former WWF World champion was one of the true giants of the sport, a fierce rulebreaker. He died of heart failure on June 19 and was only 60 at the time of his death. I'm sure even Bruno Sammartino, one of his arch-rivals, will miss him. □

## The Insider

(Continued from page 14)

The trifecta of talent has a myriad possibilities.

On one night, Jerry Lawler became the single most influential man in professional wrestling. Months earlier, he started the war, railing on ECW as a gathering of low-talent miscreants and has-beens. Even when he discovered that he stood alone with no support from other WWF wrestlers, he continued and even got more hostile toward ECW. That's guts. Period. I defy any other wrestler to do what Lawler did.

This is the Lawler that we all remember. This is the "King" who whooped Andy Kaufman and kicked Curt Hennig's butt for the AWA World title. This is the man who took it to Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage in their prime. Lawler once ruled the Memphis rings, not the stage at a comedy club's amateur night.

So while Goldust talks about being Dustin Rhodes and Mankind talks about being Cactus Jack and Dude Love and Mick Foley, Jerry Lawler, without words, is reinventing himself into a tough, no-nonsense wrestler. A far cry from the clownish oaf who once sat helplessly in the ring as Bret Hart stuffed Lawler's own toes into his mouth after a "kiss my foot" match. And we don't need video vignettes this time. Lawler is a walking, talking look into his past.

Of course ever since he joined the WWF, Lawler has been accused of having a split personality. Good (for the most part) in the USWA. Bad in the WWF. He explained his actions by pledging his hatred for the WWF. But fans weren't

buying it and soon Lawler was a rulebreaker exclusively. Still, though, the dichotomy existed. Lawler was a leader in the USWA, a prankster in the WWF.

While Lawler continues to do his share of comedic color commentary on WWF telecasts, I believe we'll soon be seeing more of the Lawler I saw invade ECW. I truly

believe that we have seen the last of the wannabe standup comedian and we'll be seeing more of a general getting his troops prepared for all-out war. The clown has effectively been buried. The bravest man in wrestling has been reborn.

I guess it's safe to say it: "The King" is dead! Long live "The King"! □



This is how Lawler looked on the night in May of 1988 when he beat Curt Hennig for the AWA World title. He was bloody and battered, but at the end of the evening, he was a champion. Maybe he's been watching old tapes of himself.



## On Assignment

(Continued from page 16)



It might be time for Madusa to get out those high-heel shoes again so she can practice kicking wrestlers she doesn't like, which is something she used to do when she was with The Dangerous Alliance.

erased. WCW's women's division is all but dead.

Now instead of being a leader, Madusa has been reduced to a sack of tears, blubbing over the loss of her career. Rumors are floating that she will likely become a manager yet again. Great. Now she can be a showpiece instead of the entire show. She can stand in the shadows instead of the spotlight.

It seems to me that Madusa has already done that. After winning titles in America and Japan, she retired from active competition and became a successful manager in The Dangerous Alliance. Her official title was Director of Covert

Operations, but let's be honest about what her *real* role was: She was there to look nice, interfere occasionally, and stand by (or behind) her man, the man in this case being Rick Rude.

Not surprisingly, she got sick of that eventually, returned to active competition, and succeeded again.

I can't wait to again see her standing outside the ring shouting words of encouragement to whomever it is she wants to manage. You can be sure more women will follow her lead, too. Sure, we will still see some veteran athletes such as Bambi, Lelani Kai, Debbie Combs, and Candi Devine

mixing it up once in a while on the independent circuit, but mostly we will see women serving only as window dressing to their male counterparts.

In spite of everything that has happened, I will give WCW credit for trying more than any promotion in recent memory to make a women's division work. It even tried to create a second division of cruiserweights, implying that other women wrestled as heavyweights? *Yikes!* But it wasn't nearly enough.

Years ago, when the LPWA folded, I viewed it as a telling sign of the future of women's wrestling. Madusa's forced retirement will have more of an impact that one all-women organization going under did.

In spite of half-hearted promotional efforts and lukewarm fan response, Madusa should have hung in there a while longer. She's done it before. She could have done it again. Instead, she risked everything on one match. No matter how much she wails and gnashes her teeth, she must take some responsibility for putting an entire division on life support.

Maybe ECW will be the next promotion to try a women's division. Beulah McGillicutty and Francine may be only valets, but they've been involved in some mixed matches. They do their best to beat up men. Heck, Beulah even executed a moonsault once. But this is unlikely.

The sad reality of the situation is that women's wrestling as we know it in this country may be dead. Long live Debra McMichael! Long live Sable! Long live Sunny!

Oh, and thanks, Madusa. Thanks for nothing. Now go take your place in history. That, I suppose, will be behind a man. □

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**January 1994 (Special Issue): Wrestling's Seasonal Spectaculars! WWF's SummerSlam, WCW's Fall Brawl.** Plus: Rick Martel, Missy Hyatt, Razor-Schyster, Steven Regal, Orndorff-Flair, Moscoso-Liger.

**February 1994: Our Holiday Wish List For 1994.** Plus: Hogan-Savage-Bret, Hacksaw Duggan, Doink, Hollywood Blonds, Steven Regal.

**March 1994: Inside Wrestling Predicts: What's In Store For '94.** Plus: Nastys & Missy, Col. Parker, Ludwig Barga, chairs, Survivor Series, Diesel-Michaels.

**April 1994 (Special Issue): The Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament.** Also: Lex Luger, Starrcade, Yoko-Fuji, Ric Flair, Curt Hennig, Funk-Sabu.

**May 1994: Lex Luger & Bret Hart: Their Greatest Triumphs, Their Gravest Tragedies.** Also: Flair-Rude, Rick Martel, Heenan-Backwinkel, Brian Christopher, Yoko-Booger.

**June 1994: Wake Up, Rick Steamboat: Ric Flair Is Still "Slick" Ric!** Also: Jimmy Snuka, Tony Anthony, IRS, Bruise Brothers, Alundra Blayze, Freebirds.

**July 1994 (Special Issue): A Look Into Wrestling's Future: You Won't Believe What You'll See!** Also: Ron Simmons, Sting, Earthquake-Booger, Bob Armstrong, Diesel.

**August 1994: 10 Years After Rock 'n' Wrestling: It's Time For Roddy To Get Rowdy Again!** Also: Hulk Hogan, 911, Freebirds, rulebreakers, Cornette & Bodies, Bushwhackers.

**September 1994: The Resurrection Of The Undertaker.** Also: Nastys-Cactus & Maxx, Flair-Steamboat, Nikolai Volkoff, Rock 'n' Roll, Luna Vachon.

**October 1994 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report.** Also: Doink, Vader-Race, Mabel, Dory Funk Jr., Owen-Bret, Hall of Fame.

**December 1994: Hogan In Paradise ... And Ric Flair Feels The Thunder.** Also: Bret-Owen, Rottens, Cactus, AAA midgits, Sparky Plugg, Donn E. Allen.

**February 1995: It's Getting Ugly: Wrestling's Losing Its Greatest Heroes.** Also: Sting, McMahon-Lawler, Cactus-Tommy, Woman, Brutus-Hogan, Valentine-Doink.

**March 1995: Predictions 1995.** Also: Nastys, Razor Ramon, Tasmaniac, Kid-Man O'-War, Pillman & Hogan.

**April 1995 (Special Issue): The 1995 Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament!** Also: Diesel, Vader-Austin, Lex Luger, Jerry Lawler, Johnny B. Badd, Al Snow.

**June 1995: The Beginning Of The End? Will Hulk Hogan Get Burned By Friendly Fire?** Also: Steve Austin, Gangstas, Public Enemy, Bret-Owen, Jeff Jarrett.

**July 1995 (Special Issue): Wrestling Coal!!! What's In—And Why—In The Mat Sport Today.** Also: Savage & Sting, Alex Wright, Bruise Brothers, Dan Severn, Ivan Putski.

**August 1995: The Untold Truth: WrestleMania X—The Winners And Losers.** Also: Johnny B. Badd, Bam Bam Bigelow, John Studd, Bubba-Sling.

**October 1995 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report.** Also: Randy Savage, Bret & Cactus, Sting, Diesel, Hawk.

**November 1995: One Defense In Four Months?! Strip Hulk Hogan Of The Title—Now!** Also: Alex Wright, Tatanka, King of Ring, Chris Benoit, Backlund-Clinton.

**December 1995: White With Fright, Green With Envy: Why The Undertaker Had To Bury Kama.** Also: Vader-Hogan, Warrior-Renegade, Gangstas-PE, Waylon Mercy, Heavenly Bodies.

**January 1996: Our Holiday Wish List For 1996!** Also: Scott Norton, Sid Vicious, Psicosis-Misterio, Barry Horowitz, Sabu.

**February 1996: Wrestling's Top Stars: What 1996 Has In Store For Them!** Also: Goldust, Sherri-Parker, Mikey Whipwreck, Smokin' Gunns.

**March 1996: His Excellency! How Bret Masterminded Diesel's Execution.** Also: Jeff Jarrett, Giant, Jim Cornette, Survivor Series, Eddy Guerrero.

**April 1996 (Special Issue): The 1996 Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament.** Also: Bret-Undertaker, Four Horsemen, British Bulldog, Randy Savage, Sabu.

**May 1996: Ready ... Aim ... Maim! The Sick Race To Cripple Shawn Michaels.** Also: Shona Douglas, Arn Anderson, Jerry Lawler, Hogan-Flair.

**June 1996: Luger Or Hogan? If Sting Makes The Wrong Choice, He's Through!** Also: Road Warriors, Roddy Piper, Ahmed Johnson, Raven, Al Snow.

**July 1996 (Special Issue): Warrior: Why He'll Save The WWF; Why He'll Sink The WWF.** Also: Top stars answer personal questions, Diesel-Hogan, Dallas Page, Bret Hart.

**August 1996: The Greening Of Wrestling: How Sting & Shawn Will Become \$50,000,000 Men!** Also: Bodydunnus, Giant, Guerrero-Misterio, George Steele, Goldust & Morienu.

**September 1996: She's No Boob! Sunny: More Than Just Sex Appeal.** Also: Lawler-Jarrett, 911, Brian Pillman, Alex Wright, championship chaos.

**October 1996 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report.** Also: Jake Roberts, Yokozuna, Giant-Konnan, Ahmed Johnson, Chris Jericho, strutters.

**November 1996: The Steiners: Feasting On A Buffet Of Violence.** Also: Shawn Michaels, Sabu-Douglas, King of Ring, Eddy Guerrero, truck stop terror.

**December 1996: Three Women For Four Horsemen? The Hot Search For A Fourth Filly Has Begun!** Also: Sunny & Gunns, Giant, Goldust, Cornette & Hart, Jerry Jarrett.

**Holiday 1996 (Special Issue): The Tombstone: Wrestling's Deadliest Finisher.** Also: 1997 calendar, "Psycho" Sid, Benoit-Misterio, Steiners-NWO, Fil Bull I, Justin Liger.

**January 1997: Dreaming Of A Sunny Christmas ... Our Holiday Wish List For The Stars.** Also: Michaels & Undertaker, Sting, Barry Windham, Faarooq, NWO.

**February 1997: Trouble In Egoville: Is There An NWO Within The NWO?** Also: Chris Candido, Bret-Shawn, Ric Flair, Joey Styles, Liger-Benoit.

**March 1997: Why Bret's Execution Will Be Excellent By WrestleMania!** Also: Roddy Piper, Syxx, Survivor Series, Steve Austin, talent scouts.

**April 1997 (Special Issue): The 1997 Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament.** Also: Helmsley-Mariena-Sable, Nasty Boys, Flash Funk, Taz, Rick Steiner.

**May 1997: Giant vs. Hogan: "Hey, Little Man, What Ya Gonna Do?"** Also: Woman-Benoit-Sullivan, Shawn-Bret, Undertaker, Scott Hall, Sabu.

**June 1997: Ahmed Johnson Reveals: "I Almost Joined The Nation Of Domination."** Plus: Mankind, Lex Luger, NWO, Davey Boy Smith, Jerry Graham.

**July 1997 (Special Issue): House Of Horrors! Fourth World Title Change In '97 ... Can The Undertaker Restore Order?** Plus: Stars answer personal questions, Steve McMichael, Road Warriors, Syxx, Sandman-Lori-Tyler.

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# RIC FLAIR— WRESTLING'S MOST VERSATILE CHAMPION

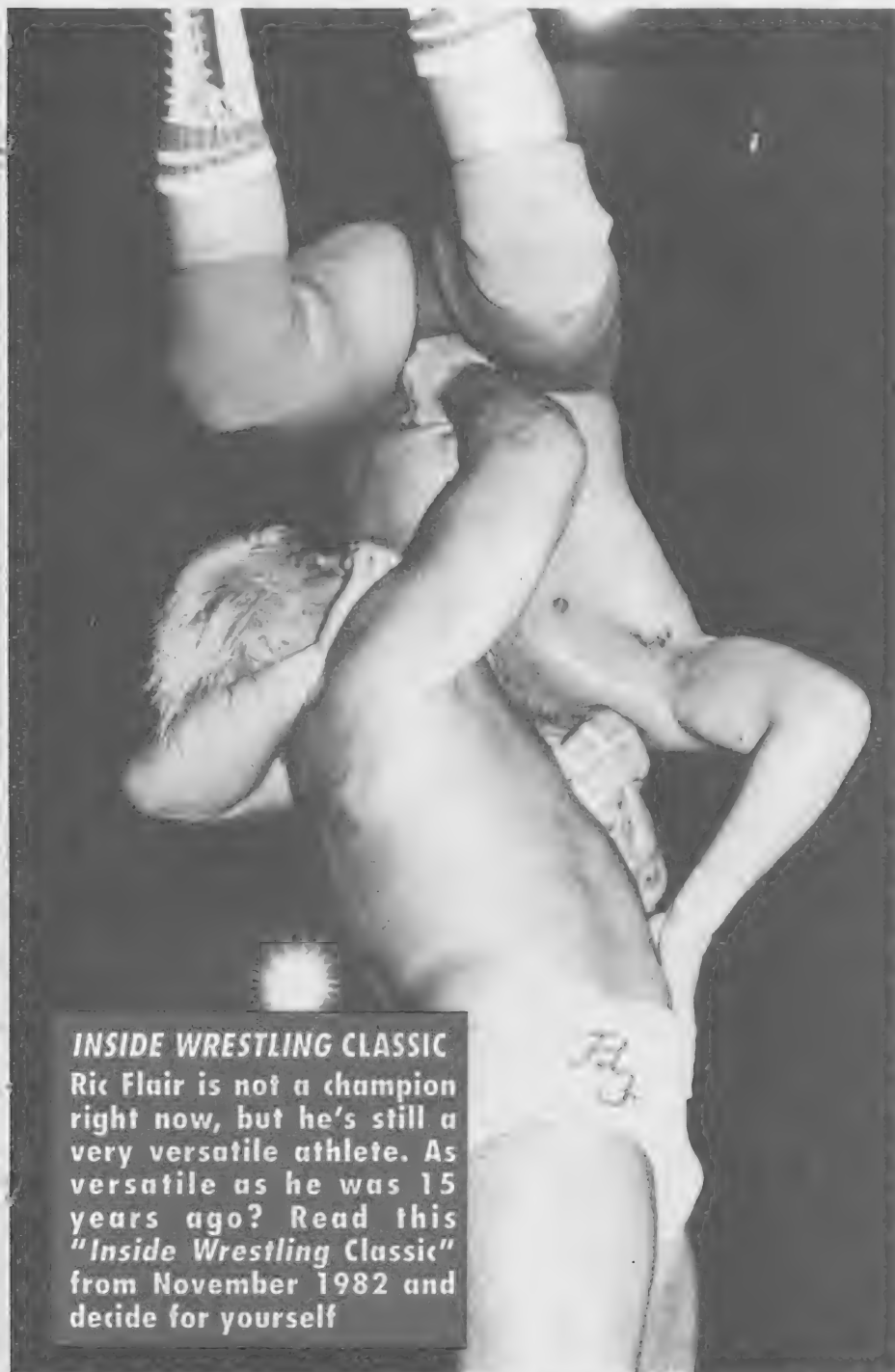
**W**ITH A LAUGH that was cold and angry, Tommy Rich admitted, "He fooled us all. He came on like a spoiled kid who couldn't see past his image in the mirror. We figured he'd gain some popularity as an oddball and then drop from sight. Instead, Flair is now NWA champion. Ric Flair is now champion. Ric Flair fooled us all."

Tommy Rich isn't the only wrestler kicking himself in his hindsight. The best wrestlers in the world have walked away from their title bouts against Flair stunned that he remains champion. After all, it takes courage, concentration and intelligence to remain champion. That didn't sound like Flair. But as they now admit, Flair managed to fool some of the people for a very long time.

"When he first won the title," Bob Armstrong explains, "I started licking my chops, tasting the title. I didn't think Flair would hold it for a week. Even after he was champ for months, I figured he was lucky. Hell, I've been a professional for decades and I know better to dismiss any success as luck. I should have known better. But he fooled me so completely that I couldn't see the obvious. Flair is obviously great. And he's smart enough to hide his greatness so that even when you wrestle him, you have no idea why he's beating you. Flair isn't only a great wrestler,



He has proved many times that he is a consummate scientific wrestler, and that he can rise to the occasion against the most precise opponent. If need be, he can also match and surpass an opponent's brawling and rulebreaking tactics. NWA heavyweight champion Ric Flair can do it all



#### INSIDE WRESTLING CLASSIC

Ric Flair is not a champion right now, but he's still a very versatile athlete. As versatile as he was 15 years ago? Read this "Inside Wrestling Classic" from November 1982 and decide for yourself

Flair has challenger Ted DiBiase in an extremely precarious position as he is about to complete a suplex (above). The NWA champion springs off the middle rope to add force to an elbowsmash to the top of DiBiase's head (top right).



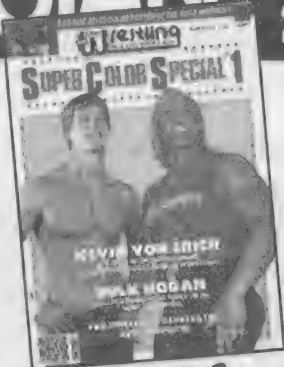
he's a master of disguise."

More and more, top NWA challengers are grudgingly admitting that Flair may be one of the all-time greats. Men who once dismissed him as a light-weight talent are more and more impressed with his championship reign. Some even say the best is yet to come.

"I know Ric Flair better than anyone," says long-time friend Rick Steamboat. "Do you know what they call guys who underestimate Flair's talent? They call 'em losers. A few weeks ago Flair wrestled Ted DiBiase in Texas. Most guys in Flair's position would have been very nervous—after all, DiBiase's style has just changed, he's now into rule-breaking. Not only that, but Flair had been wrestling scientific wrestlers exclusively for the past few weeks.

(Continued on page 62)

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## RIC FLAIR

(Continued from page 61)

"So just look at the situation. Flair's wrestling a guy who may be either a rulebreaker or a scientific wrestler. Most other guys would tear their hair out in anxiety at all the unknowns in this match. Not Flair. He knows that whatever his opponent does, he can counter it. Scientific, rulebreaker, hero, or madman, it doesn't matter. Flair's got what I like to call a championship head. He doesn't realize he can lose.

And that's why he doesn't.

In the match against DiBiase, it was Flair who was constantly defending against rulebreaking tactics. DiBiase broke the rules almost from the opening bell. Yet Flair wrestled valiantly and successfully. Had he not been in perfect shape, he couldn't have withstood DiBiase's onslaught. But it is becoming increasingly obvious that Flair's greatest asset as champion is his great



Flair has the ability to adapt to the style of his challenger. Tommy Rich releases an agonizing shout as his fingers are bent to the breaking point.





training regimen.

"He pretends not to train," Steamboat reveals, "but he really works twice as hard as anybody else. He's probably the most athletically intelligent wrestler in the world. He knows more about different styles than anyone I've ever known. That's why no matter who wrestles against him, he can not only cope, he can conquer."

When told of the title of this article, Steamboat reflected for a moment, then added, "I'd agree he's versatile, both mentally and physically. There are some people who can instinctively adapt their bodies to any given situation. Harley Race was such a champion, a physical genius. But Flair is both. He's so prepared, he never leaves anything to instinct. In fact, I don't think he's ever done anything instinctively in his life. He may go into a situation with 100 possibilities, but each possibility has been thought out beforehand. The only time Ric will ever be in trouble is when he has to come up with possibility 101.

"Ric is always thinking. Now, he'll deny it, but I bet he wasn't too heartbroken when he lost that title match to Tommy Rich,

Rick Steamboat uses his legs in an effort to defend against Flair's suplex (top left), but the champion would have the strength to bring Steamboat over anyway. With Dick Slater dangling helplessly in the ropes, Flair rips at his opponent's nostrils (above).

the one when Rich didn't get the belt because he was a substitute for Dusty Rhodes. Rich didn't know a substitution meant he couldn't win the belt. Flair knew it. So he took chances he never would have taken if the belt was on the line. He lost the match, and everyone said that proved he wasn't a real champion. They took him less seriously, and he beat their butts all over the NWA. How many other wrestlers would have made a substitution work for them? Notice when Flair wrestles Rich with the belt on the line, Ric always keeps the title. I bet Rich still thinks he's not champ because of bad luck and a technicality."

Yet, there's a darker side to Flair's versatility. He can do so much, so he seeks to do so much

more. As one friend says, "The championship is forcing Ric into giving up many things he'd like to try. He resents the many demands the championship makes. They say he likes to party and be rowdy; the title doesn't allow him to do that. That's a crock. He parties because he's trying to deaden his fear that he's missing so much.

"Most wrestlers live only for a title. Ric wants more; he wants to be the greatest, most complete wrestler who ever lived. If Ric loses the title, it will be because he subconsciously wants to surrender the life of a champion."

Ric Flair fooled them all. The only thing that now threatens his title is that though the world is wise to him, he may not be wise to himself. □

# OFFICIAL RATINGS

## TOP 15

### 1—THE UNDERTAKER

(1) WWF World champion

### 2—LEX LUGER

(2) No. 2 contender: WCW World title

### 3—JEFF JARRETT

(4) U.S. heavyweight champion

### 4—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

(7) No. 3 contender: WCW World title

### 5—OWEN HART

(8) WWF Intercontinental champion

### 6—CHRIS JERICO

(-) WCW cruiserweight champion

### 7—STEVE AUSTIN

(3) No. 3 contender: WWF World title

### 8—CHRIS BENOIT

(11) No. 7 contender: WCW World title

### 9—TAZ

(14) ECW TV champion

### 10—KEN SHAMROCK

(-) No. 4 contender: WWF World title

### 11—BIG VAN VADER

(-) No. 5 contender: WWF World title

### 12—TERRY FUNK

(10) ECW heavyweight champion

### 13—DEAN MALENKO

(12) No. 8 contender: WCW World title

### 14—DAVEY BOY SMITH

(9) No. 6 contender: WWF World title

### 15—SHANE DOUGLAS

(-) No. 1 contender: ECW title

## WCW

### 1—HULK HOGAN

(1) 275, Venice Beach, CA

### 2—JEFF JARRETT

(2) 230, Nashville, TN

### 3—LEX LUGER

(3) 265, Chicago, IL

### 4—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

(6) 260, Tampa, FL

### 5—CHRIS JERICO

(15) 225, Vancouver, British Columbia

### 6—RODDY PIPER

(-) 247, Glasgow, Scotland

### 7—SYXX

(9) 212, Minneapolis, MN

### 8—CHRIS BENOIT

(7) 218, Edmonton, Alberta

### 9—DEAN MALENKO

(5) 216, Tampa, FL

### 10—RIC FLAIR

(-) 243, Charlotte, NC

### 11—EDDY GUERRERO

(-) 221, El Paso, TX

### 12—LORD STEVEN REGAL

(13) 247, Blackpool, England

### 13—ULTIMO DRAGON

(8) 175, Mexico City, Mexico

### 14—STEVE MCMICHAEL

(-) 270, Austin, TX

### 15—KONNAN

(11) 237, Mexico City, Mexico

## WWF

### 1—THE UNDERTAKER

(1) 328, parts unknown

### 2—OWEN HART

(2) 227, Calgary, Alberta

### 3—BRET HART

(-) 235, Calgary, Alberta

### 4—STEVE AUSTIN

(3) 241, Dallas, TX

### 5—KEN SHAMROCK

(-) 235, San Bernardino, CA

### 6—BIG VAN VADER

(-) 450, Denver, CO

### 7—DAVEY BOY SMITH

(4) 245, Leeds, England

### 8—HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY

(6) 279, Greenwich, CT

### 9—MANKIND

(7) 277, Truth or Consequences, NM

### 10—GOLDUST

(5) 254, Austin, TX

### 11—SAVIO VEGA

(12) 260, Vago Alta, Puerto Rico

### 12—BRIAN PILLMAN

(10) 226, Cincinnati, OH

### 13—FAAROOQ

(9) 291, Perry, GA

### 14—CRUSH

(14) 322, Kona, HI

### 15—ROCKABILLY

(13) 256, Austin, TX

## ECW

### 1—TERRY FUNK

(1) 247, Amarillo, TX

### 2—TAZ

(2) 248, Red Hook, NY

### 3—SHANE DOUGLAS

(4) 240, Pittsburgh, PA

### 4—THE SANDMAN

(8) 244, Philadelphia, PA

### 5—TOMMY DREAMER

(3) 245, Yonkers, NY

### 6—CHRIS CANDIDO

(7) 226, Carteret, NJ

### 7—ROB VAN DAM

(6) 227, Battle Creek, MI

### 8—BAM BAM BIGELOW

(-) 368, Mt. Laurel, NJ

### 9—SABU

(5) 220, Bombay, India

### 10—JOHN KRONUS

(15) 250, Boston, MA

### 11—B. MAHONEY

(9) 361, Carteret, NJ

### 12—LOUIE SPICOLLI

(-) 248, Los Angeles, CA

### 13—CHRIS CHETTI

(11) 227, Amityville, NY

### 14—AXL ROTTEN

(10) 302, Philadelphia, PA

### 15—MIKEY WHIPWRECK

(12) 187, New York, NY

## INTERNATIONAL

### 1—MITSU HARU MISAWA

(1) 228, Saitama, Japan

### 2—SHINYA HASHIMOTO

(3) 287, Gisu, Japan

### 3—EL SAMURAI

(-) 200, Tokyo, Japan

### 4—PSICOSIS

(12) 200, Tijuana, Mexico

### 5—JUSHIN LIGER

(7) 206, Hiroshima, Japan

### 6—TOSHI AKI KAWADA

(2) 245, Tizhigi, Japan

### 7—ULTIMO DRAGON

(5) 175, Tokyo, Japan

### 8—KEIJI MUTO

(9) 245, Tokyo, Japan

### 9—DAVID FINDLAY

(14) 231, Belfast, Ireland

### 10—KENTA KOBASHI

(4) 261, Tokyo, Japan

### 11—KOJI KANEMOTO

(11) 205, Tokyo, Japan

### 12—JUN AKIYAMA

(10) 230, Hiroshima, Japan

### 13—KONNAN

(-) 237, Mexico City, Mexico

### 14—JUVENTUD GUERRERA

(13) 165, Mexico City, Mexico

### 15—CARLOS COLON

(-) 246, San Juan, Puerto Rico

## TOP 15 TAG TEAMS

### 1—THE GIANT & LEX LUGER

(5) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title

### 2—STEVE AUSTIN & DUDE LOVE

(-) WWF World tag team champions

### 3—RICK & SCOTT STEINER

(4) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title

### 4—OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH

(-) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title

### 5—SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH

(1) WCW World tag team champions

### 6—THE ROAD WARRIORS

(2) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title

### 7—BUH BUH RAY & D-VON DUDLEY

(13) ECW tag team champions

### 8—PG-13

(-) USWA tag team champions

### 9—HARLEM HEAT

(3) No. 3 contenders: WCW World tag title

### 10—SABU & ROB VAN DAM

(9) No. 1 contenders: ECW tag title

### 11—HENRY & PHINEAS GODWINN

(8) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title

### 12—THE HEADBANGERS

(10) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title

### 13—THE GANGSTAS

(11) No. 2 contenders: ECW tag title

### 14—FAAROOQ & KAMA MUSTAFA

(-) No. 5 contenders: WWF World tag title

### 15—THE BLACKJACKS

(7) No. 6 contenders: WWF World tag title

*These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue... "Most Popular" and "Most Hated" ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and on mail that comes to our offices ... Championships highlighted in bold on the "Roll Call Of Champions" have changed hands since our previous issue ... The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place.*

**For period ended July 17, 1997**

## ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

**ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: MITSU HARU MISAWA**  
(January 20, 1997; from Kenta Kobashi; Osaka, Japan)

**ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: JOHNNY ACE & KENTA KOBASHI**  
(May 27, 1997; from Toshiaki Kawada & Akira Taue; Sapporo, Japan)

**ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPION: MITSU HARU MISAWA**  
(January 20, 1997; from Kenta Kobashi; Osaka, Japan)

**ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S ALL-PACIFIC CHAMPION: TAKAKO INOUE**  
(November 21, 1996; from Reggie Bennett; Kobe, Japan)

**ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S CHAMPION: RIE TAMADA**  
(November 21, 1996; from Kumiko Maekawa; Kobe, Japan)

**ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: CHIKAYA NAGASHIMA & SUGAR SATO**  
(September 1, 1996; from Yumi Fukawa & Rie Tamada; Tokyo, Japan)

**CENTURY WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TITLE VACANT**  
(Most recently held by Kevin Sullivan)

**ECW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TERRY FUNK**  
(April 13, 1997; from Raven; Philadelphia, PA)

**ECW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: BUH BUH RAY & D-VON DUDLEY**  
(June 20, 1997; from The Eliminators; Waltham, MA)

**ECW TELEVISION CHAMPION: TAZ**  
(June 7, 1997; from Shane Douglas; Philadelphia, PA)

**IWGP JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: EL SAMURAI**  
(July 6, 1997; from Jushin Liger; Sapporo, Japan)

**IWGP HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SHINYA HASHIMOTO**  
(April 29, 1996; from Nobuhiko Takada; Tokyo, Japan)

**IWGP INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: SATOSHI KOJIMA & MANABU NAKANISHI**  
(May 3, 1997; from Riki Choshu & Kensuke Sasaki; Osaka, Japan)

**IPWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BIG SLAM**  
(January 11, 1997; beat Guido Falcone; Pikeville, NC)

**MID-EASTERN WRESTLING FEDERATION LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: ADAM FLASH**  
(March 2, 1997; beat Steve Corino & Quinn Nash in three-way match; Baltimore, MD)

**MID-EASTERN WRESTLING FEDERATION MID-ATLANTIC CHAMPION: QUINN NASH**  
(June 1, 1997; from Jimmy Cicero; Baltimore, MD)

**NWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: DAN SEVERN**  
(February 24, 1995; from Chris Candido; Erlanger, KY)

**NWA NORTH AMERICAN HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RECKLESS YOUTH**  
(June 14, 1997; from Ace Darling; Vineland, NJ)

**NWA U.S. TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE MISFITS**  
(June 14, 1997; from The Beach Burns; Vineland, NJ)

**NORTH AMERICAN ALL-STAR WRESTLING NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPION: COLORADO KID**  
(June 28, 1997; beat Trailer Park Trash in tournament final; Springfield, TN)

**PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MITSU HARU MISAWA**  
(January 20, 1997; from Kenta Kobashi; Osaka, Japan)

**PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: YOSHINARI OGAWA**  
(January 15, 1997; from Tsuyoshi Kikuchi; Tokyo, Japan)

**PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TOSHIKI KAWADA & AKIRA TAU**  
(January 17, 1997; from Johnny Ace & Steve Williams; Matsumoto, Japan)

**PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: CHEETAH MASTER**  
(April 4, 1997; from Julio Sanchez; Reading, PA)

**PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: JUDD THE STUD**  
(March 7, 1997; from Pat Shamrock; Reading, PA)

**PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: ACE DARLING & GLEN OSBOURNE**  
(December 27, 1996; from Double Delight; Reading, PA)

**PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: GEORGE SOUTH**  
(July 12, 1997; from Italian Stallion; Gaffney, SC)

**PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MADD MAXXINE**  
(August 24, 1996; beat Black Angel; Forest City, NC)

**PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE BLACK DRAGONS**  
(June 20, 1997; from Flaming Youth & Masked Maniac; Morganton, NC)

**USWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: JERRY LAWLER**  
(April 27, 1997; from King Reginald; Memphis, TN)

**USWA SOUTHERN CHAMPION: DOOMSDAY**  
(July 13, 1997; from Spellbinder; Memphis, TN)

**USWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: PG-13**  
(July 13, 1997; beat Flash Flanagan & Steven Dunn in tournament final; Memphis, TN)

**WCW CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPION: CHRIS JERICHO**  
(June 28, 1997; from Syxx; Los Angeles, CA)

**WCW TELEVISION CHAMPION: LORD STEVEN REGAL**  
(May 18, 1997; from Ultimo Dragon; Charlotte, NC)

**WCW U.S. CHAMPION: JEFF JARRETT**  
(June 9, 1997; from Dean Malenko; Boston, MA)

**WCW WORLD CHAMPION: HULK HOGAN**  
(August 10, 1996; from The Giant; Sturgis, SD)

**WCW WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH**  
(October 27, 1996; from Harlem Heat; Las Vegas, NV)

**WWF EUROPEAN CHAMPION: DAVEY BOY SMITH**  
(February 26, 1997; beat Owen Hart in tournament final; Berlin, Germany)

**WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: OWEN HART**  
(April 28, 1997; from Rocky Maivia; Omaha, NE)

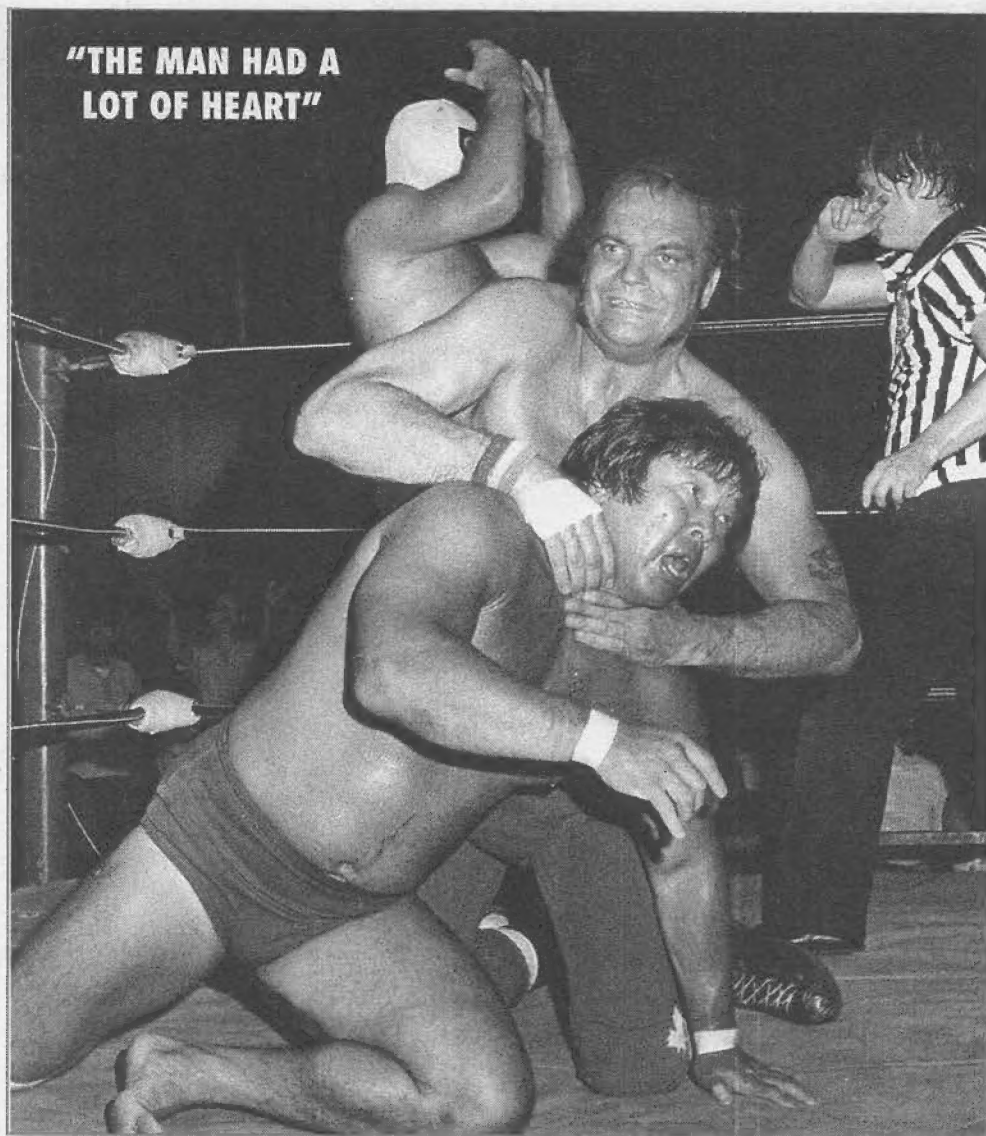
**WWF WORLD CHAMPION: THE UNDERTAKER**  
(March 23, 1997; from "Psycho" Sid Vicious; Chicago, IL)

**WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: STEVE AUSTIN & DUDE LOVE**  
(July 14, 1997; beat Owen Hart & Davey Boy Smith; San Antonio, TX)



# BLAST FROM THE PAST

## This Month In Wrestling History

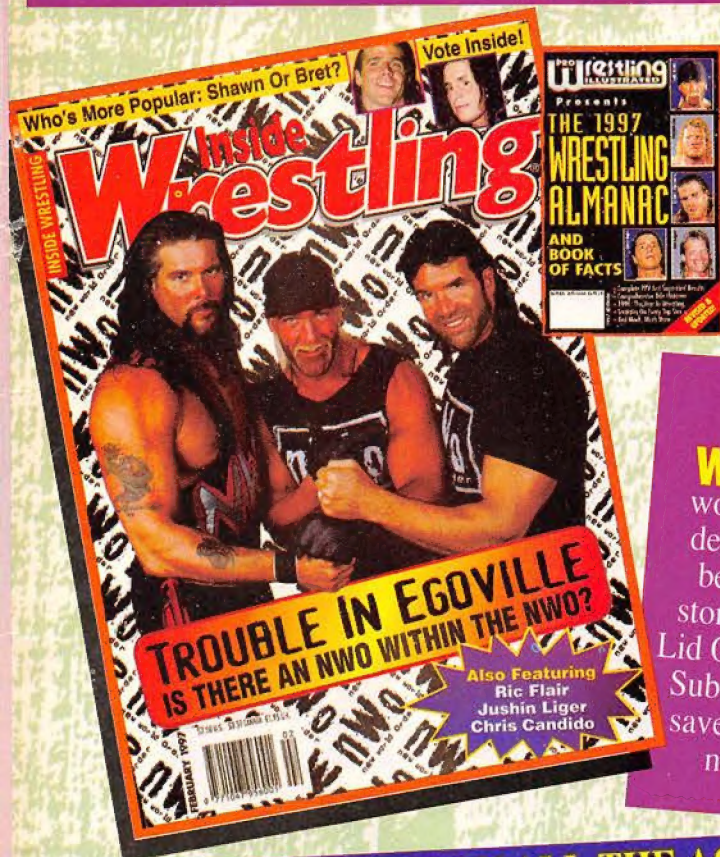


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